

THE
DEVIL'S ADVOCATE.

BY
PERCY GREG,
AUTHOR OF "INTERLEAVES."

" Knowledge comes but Wisdom lingers ; and I linger on the shore,
And the Individual withers, and the World is more and more.

Knowledge comes but Wisdom lingers ; and he bears a laden breast
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest."

TENNYSON'S *Locksley Hall*.

VOL. I.

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P R E F A C E.



THE function of the Devil's Advocate in the Spiritual Courts of Rome is to contest the posthumous pretensions of new candidates for canonization. There is no similar officer in the various Schools of Philosophy ; and no volunteer counsel seems willing to imperil his repute as a representative of the advanced Intellect of his day by challenging the title of the Nineteenth Century and its mushroom progeny of new ideas, Positive or Destructive, to immediate admission among the recognized objects of human adoration—the acknowledged tests of enlightenment and intelligence. The accepted champions of orthodoxy, on whom might well devolve such a duty, are fettered like Madoc on the Stone of Sacrifice ; encounter modern artillery with bows and arrows. The author, having no repute of either kind to lose, presumes on his freedom rather than on his capacity to say what others might say much better. To escape the suspicion of plagiarism, he ventures to observe that the book was complete before the *New Republic* was printed ; and that he had occasion to give in a published adhesion to the doctrine of

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Conditioned Omnipotence very long before he could have learnt it from the theological legacies of Mr. J. S. Mill.

The form is that of conversation rather than of dialogue; and the writer has sought to present his *dramatis personae* not as advocates of particular schools, still less as caricatures of individual teachers, but as real men and women; with dispositions developed by diverse circumstances acting on their several natures, each regarding the topics of their talk from a standpoint determined by his or her original temper as affected by different careers and experiences. He has endeavoured to give to each a consistent and distinct individuality, clear enough to introduce the elements of personal interest into what might otherwise seem monotonous argument; to relieve the dryness of discussion by making the debaters not mere lay-figures, but, so to speak, the characters of a novel without a story.

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THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

“YOU must take a holiday,” said Dr. B. C., whom I consulted at the close of one of the most trying and exciting parliamentary sessions of recent years. “You want not merely a change, but a rest. Nothing surprises me more in my professional experience of the varied and manifold folly of mankind than the preposterous manner in which they are apt to carry out this simplest, safest, and soundest of medical prescriptions. In August, scarcely a day passes wherein I am not consulted by seven or eight men like yourself, worn out with political, professional, or commercial labour and excitement. I tell them to take a holiday abroad, because while they remain at home, even if they do no work hard enough to tire or troublesome enough to tease them, their brain runs on in the grooves to which it has been habituated; and they get none of that repose and refreshment which proceeds from mere change of action, mental as well as muscular. But I tell them also to rest, and that they will seldom or never do. The men of science are almost the only

intellectual labourers who understand how to take a holiday. For the rest of you—politicians, authors, lawyers, men of business, to whose excited brain and overstrung nerves quiet and freedom from worry and hurry are so essential that you would be far better employed in lying on your back for a month on your own lawns than in the most interesting travel—your notion of rest, your idea of a change from harassing or wearing toil consists in travelling as fast and as far as time will permit, and seeing all the sights that can be crowded into each successive day. You exchange the big serious worries of your daily work for the minute, numerous, and more exasperating and teasing worries of Bradshaw and Murray; and, to ensure the certainty of petty annoyance and trouble, to secure yourselves against all chance of repose, you contrive invariably to take with you the trunks and handboxes, tongues and tempers, of as many ladies as possible. Why, you would gain more by solitary confinement for a month in Pentonville. You never get a sound night's rest. You have seldom time to digest your breakfast. Your eyes are fatigued with sight after sight; your minds harassed with an incessant series of small responsibilities—the duty of catching trains, paying cabs, and watching over the safety of numerous packages; so that you go to bed even more tired, and even more sleepless, than after a hard day's work in the Court of Queen's Bench, or a stormy night's debate in the House of Commons. And then, if you come back in worse case than ever, you suppose that your doctor's prescription has failed, and that drugs may do for you what rest cannot do; the truth being that you have

never given yourselves an hour's true rest, or a day of real repose. If it were not for the Sabbatarian superstition of your wives and daughters, I verily believe that half of you would come back from your autumn holiday fit for no place but a lunatic asylum. Now, remember, I tell you to *rest* for six weeks. And I also tell you that a page of Bradshaw is worse for you than a dozen leading articles written with the 'devil' at your elbow; and that the jarring and jolting of a railway train is as bad for your nerves as sitting strung up to the keenest excitement in the gallery, when Gladstone or Disraeli is concluding a great party debate at three in the morning and the Whips themselves cannot predict the result. In truth, you ought to have come to me long ago. Whenever a man begins to dream of his work or his immediate troubles, whenever in falling asleep he sees before him night after night the images that have been present to his mind during the day, nervous mischief of a serious kind is setting in. I have met many men who have gone through very heavy trouble—often involving prolonged anxiety and distress—without visible injury to health; and on questioning such men, I have generally found that, though they do dream of their troubles and fight their battles over again in sleep—sometimes till sleep becomes for a while a positive terror—they have seldom done so while the trouble was actually preying or pressing on their waking minds. It is only after it has ceased to work on a given subject of very absorbing nature during the day that a healthy brain reverts to it at night. It is evidently a law of nature that sleep shall break off sharply the train of thought, the continuity of nervous

action; and on this law depends the wonderful power of endurance displayed not only by strong men but often by nervous and sensitive women under severe and trying pain or anxiety. So long as you sleep soon and soundly, and never dream of the subjects that occupy you during the day, you are not perilously overworked, though you should work for fourteen hours out of the twenty-four. The moment that the labour or sorrow or worry of the day is renewed at night, you are in danger and—unless the work in hand be dearer than life itself—you should at once break it off.”

“I grant,” I replied, “the truth of all you say as to the absurdity and actual mischief of the usual fashion of holiday-making; agree with it so thoroughly that I have not taken a holiday but twice during the last twelve years. But this time I will take a holiday after your prescription, and after my own heart, if only I can find the chance. Your alternative of solitary confinement would hardly answer. I must have a companion; and nowadays—since women have ceased to be secondary without learning to accommodate themselves to the conditions and responsibilities of equal partnership—companions who will not worry one are hard to find. Meantime, permit me to observe that doctors like all other professional men, have their special professional weakness and craze. Mad-doctors are so prone to think everybody mad, that I would rather trust my own opinion—still better the opinion of a sensible man who had not, like myself, read and seen something of madness—than that of the ablest physician now presiding over the best-managed asylum in the world. Doctors like yourself, chiefly familiar with

the class of brain-workers, have an almost equally provoking bias. They tell us that when certain symptoms occur we must rest and break off work at once; and yet they can scarcely help knowing that to break off work, except at certain regular periods, is just the one thing impossible to men who have a fixed place and fixed duties in life."

"Very likely," said the doctor. "At the same time the advice I have given *you* is practicable as well as sound. You will leave town for six weeks, and in the course of that time you will not travel 600 miles by railway; you will not write six lines, and you will not read more than six newspapers a day."

"The last direction," I said, "is very needless. I believe that few men, or even women, are so little given to read the newspapers as the men who write them."

I left Dr. C—— and walked towards Waterloo Station, wondering how I could possibly carry out his instructions. The session had been a hard one, full of sharp party battles, fought over and over again till faction itself was weary; and, as usually happens in such sessions, no measure possessing real value, even in the opinion of extreme partisans, had been carried. Some three or four topics had exclusively occupied the attention of Parliament and of the public for six months, and those who had to cater for the public satisfaction in the newspapers had been compelled to write each month some ten or twelve columns on identical lines, without a single novelty of idea or of fact to give zest to the task or interest to the finished result. If our readers were but half as tired of our limited list of topics as we were ourselves, it is strange that no per-

ceptible effect had been produced upon the circulation of the morning papers. This intolerable sameness of work, this duty of saying the same thing twenty times over in different words, is the special affliction of journalists, which they feel perhaps more severely than the other and more obvious disadvantage of their profession—the almost absolute worthlessness of all they can say on any topic whatsoever. I had never been more tired, and had seldom felt more difficulty in knowing how and where to seek for rest. But when I reached home, I found upon my study table a letter closed with a device and addressed in characters wherein I recognised at once the hand and seal of my old friend Algernon Cleveland. The post-mark was Windermere.

I had known Cleveland well for ten or twelve years: for two or three I had not seen and had scarcely heard from him. When I began my apprenticeship as a journalist by writing for the *Calico Courier*, Cleveland—though resident in London—was one of its most valued contributors. He did not write often; but his writings commanded my attention by a “fulness” which perhaps is the rarest of all qualities in newspaper articles. It is indispensable that a journalist should take up subjects as they occur: it is necessary that he should master them in a few days, be full of them for a few weeks, and forget them to make room for others. He has seldom, save by accident, time to ponder, to digest, to assimilate a subject, as men do who make one branch of thought or knowledge the special study of life, and write of that alone. Hence “leading articles” may be clear and sound, so far as they go; they are

oftener than cynics will allow sensible and practical; but they can seldom if ever be deep or thorough. Proof of their intrinsic emptiness may be found in the fact that even the intense vanity of literary fatherhood never induces any of us to collect and reprint them. Their function is to deal with political issues as these are dealt with in Parliament or in a public office—practically: taking for granted the traditions of the office and the received doctrine on the subject, and pronouncing on the immediate problem of the day from this artificial standpoint. Very seldom are they instructive to men who have an average journalist's knowledge of the subject; rarely indeed do the writers learn much from one another. In the course of fifteen years' experience, Cleveland was the only colleague whose "leaders" I regularly and carefully read—though I have worked with two or three others whose special knowledge has given interest to their occasional papers on their own favourite topics. But Cleveland's writings were exceptional. He would not "get up" a subject to command: he would write only when he chose, and on subjects he understood. But on these he wrote so well that the higher class of journals—to which, by repute and tradition, the *Courier* belonged—were glad to accept him on his own terms. Thus it happened that, on one of his visits to Calico, I made his acquaintance while he was yet a colleague of my own. But very shortly after that visit a rupture occurred. The proprietor and editor was a young and conceited man, spoilt by inheriting at the age of four-and-twenty a position of exceptional influence and authority. Master of a journal which throughout the richest of English

provinces carried a local weight almost equal to that which the *Times* enjoys with Englishmen in general, his head was turned, and he became self-confident enough to have no scruple in altering to suit his own fancy the articles written on their own especial themes by men of thrice his intelligence and ten times his experience. At the same time his conceit was not incompatible with a certain conscious weakness which rendered him amenable to the last opinion he might hear from any man of wealth and influence, any local magnate or millionaire on 'Change; or to the last suggestion whispered in his ear by some interested or ignorant "cotton lord" at the dinner-table. He had inserted an article of Cleveland's, the first of a short series on a question of special interest to the district, and had commended the writer in terms which, considering their relative age and reputation, Cleveland was inclined to regard as savouring more of arrogance than of courtesy. Ere he inserted Cleveland's second article on the same subject, the editor had been sharply assailed on 'Change by a gentleman of wealth and standing in Calico on account of the views expressed in the first article. Knowing nothing of the subject himself—and attaching infinitely greater value to the judgment of the great manufacturer, who had perhaps a hundred thousand pounds staked upon the issue, than to that of the student who had not a thousand pounds in the world—the editor did his best, with such literary skill as he had learnt at school, to alter entirely the tone and character of Cleveland's second article, thereby rendering it not only inconsistent with the first, but incoherent and illogical in itself; and

somewhat curtly desired the writer to change his treatment of the question. I was with Cleveland when he received the letter. His usually imperturbable countenance so darkened that for a moment I expected some signal expression of anger or contempt. But the next minute his frown relaxed into a smile, and throwing the note to me, he only remarked, "How little wit goes to the ruling of a—newspaper." His reply, in three lines, finally terminated his relations with the only person who, since I have known him, ever thought it possible to treat Algernon Cleveland as a servant or subordinate.

Cleveland's secession was a blow to the *Courier*; the more keenly felt that its rival, the *Mercury*, forthwith offered him an engagement on his own terms, which, however, he declined.

"I don't like your editor," he said, "and I won't have my articles altered to suit each successive phase of ignorance he encounters on the Calico Exchange. But I am diametrically at variance with the *Mercury* on first principles, and I will never contribute to a paper whose circulation I should deem it a misfortune to increase."

His income was seriously reduced, for the nonce, by this quarrel. But Cleveland had neither wife nor child, and he had deliberately ordered his style of life with a view to perfect political and literary independence. Left an orphan at an early age, and obliged to choose his own career, he had mapped out his course with a distinctness of purpose and a clearness of foresight such as—perhaps fortunately—would be possible to very few young men. "I am not," he said to me after we had

become intimate friends, "troubled with what some people call modesty. I have endeavoured not to appreciate my own powers too highly; I have never tried to rate them in my own mind below their real value, nor pretended to do so in speaking to others. I learnt at school and college to be confident that time, patience, and hard work would ensure my success in any career I was at all likely to choose. I also learnt to be quite sure that a man who means to succeed in any profession or trade must make success his paramount if not his only object. I don't mean that he must disregard the rules of honour or the obligations of conscience. On the contrary, the men who really succeed in life—who achieve respect and rank as well as wealth—are often scrupulously honourable, and, with some few exceptions, are men who act up to the highest standard of their profession;—lawyers like Sir R. P., Lord C., or Baron B., and merchants like the ——— and ———, who are as incapable of sharp practice as of downright swindling; who will even "forbear their own advantage" when the slightest taint of doubt attaches to it. Often in politics, not unfrequently in professional careers, I have seen clever men fail for lack, not of common honesty, but of a reputation for strict honour. But a man who is to succeed in the world must think firstly of professional success. He cannot refuse work that is uncongenial to his taste or deteriorating to his habits of thought. He can rarely spare time for true and thorough mental cultivation. He cannot afford to change his employment because he finds it damaging to his moral or intellectual character, or limit the quantity of his labour within reasonable bounds. Still, what people

call success in life is very sweet. It is pleasant to be looked up to by your neighbours; pleasant to be at ease about money matters; pleasant to feel that, when you find a lady whose society is worth seeking, you may dream of inviting her to share—or rather to make—your home without fear of those pecuniary troubles which so few ladies can endure. And if I had no prospect of fortune or competence save from the fruit of my own exertions, I might have made up my mind to close my education at two-and-twenty, and to become for the rest of my life merely a lawyer, a journalist, or an Oxford Don, so that I might, without imperilling wife or child, be a husband and father. As it is, I know that one day or other I shall be independent, in all likelihood, irrespectively of my own efforts; and I am willing to spend my youth alone and in poverty, in order that when that time comes I may not have lost the power of profiting by the greatest advantage of wealth—the opportunities of intellectual leisure, mental culture, and refined enjoyment which it affords. I determined not to hurry after fortune, but to enable myself to make the most of my own life, taken as a whole, in view of its probable conditions and circumstances. I resolved to make “culture” the business of my early manhood, and never to strive after more money than I needed, in order to study in comfort and to the best purpose. I resolved so to limit my wants that I might never be forced or tempted to do anything which I would not have chosen to do had I enjoyed the wealth of Croesus. Perhaps I have sometimes erred on the other side; have declined advantages which, had I needed them less, I might probably have accepted with-

out scruple. But I have never regretted my choice. I have all—except marriage—that wealth could have given me; a keen enjoyment of life, perfect independence, vigorous health, ample leisure, and, at thirty, a reputation which, however limited in its scope, is higher in character than I could have achieved in the City or at the Bar ten years later. I have access to the kind, and leisure for the amount, of social intercourse which I desire; a pleasant little cottage, with space and convenience for a friend; time and means to take a holiday when I please, and an enjoyment in my studies such as I never could have found in hard-earned luxuries. And the only real sacrifice I have had to set against all these advantages—the whole price I pay for them—is to resign the right of marrying at five-and-twenty rather than at five-and-forty.”

Cleveland had, indeed, been true to his own life-ideal. His tutor at Baliol had pressed him to read for a double-first. But he was sure that he could achieve this only by work which would leave him no leisure at all; and he chose to spend ten or twelve hours a week in Mr. ——'s gymnasium, and as many more in the choicest society of Oxford. He would read English classics instead of Euclid, and modern poetry instead of Fluxions; would speak at the Union, and prepared his speeches as carefully as his prize essays. He came out in the first class in Classics; and, to the surprise of all his friends—for he had never spoken a word on theological subjects, and had regularly attended chapel—he sacrificed his degree and his fellowship by refusing to sign the Thirty-nine Articles. He had a very small property of his own, and he made the income it

yielded suffice till he won his access to the best newspapers, magazines, and reviews, and earned from them a remuneration adequate to all his wants. When I first knew him, he had been living for some time in a small cottage of five rooms at Wandsworth, with a silent, sensible, economical, and efficient housekeeper. He walked into town and back five times a week, and passed the day in the Library of the British Museum, reading much and writing little. His evenings were spent partly in the society of living men of intellect, partly in that of the wisest and noblest minds of the past. His studies were various and wide rather than profound; for he insisted that a general acquaintance with the results of science at large was necessary to a real appreciation of any special science, and especially to that philosophy of life which was his favourite study; but he rarely quoted, and never save from authors as familiar to the educated world as to himself. His tone might be a little authoritative, but seldom if ever dogmatic; and though he was reputed a man of learning, he was thoroughly free from pedantry. "It is perhaps fortunate," he once said, "that I have a bad memory for words. I assimilate ideas, I digest facts, but I can seldom remember where I found them; and if I can keep clear of plagiarism, I have no fear of being called a pedant."

Fortune came to him earlier and more abundantly than he expected. He was barely four-and-thirty when he came into possession of what would have been an ample competence to men of much more extravagant temper and luxurious tastes, and to him was wealth. After long consideration, he determined, to my surprise,

to leave the neighbourhood of London, and fix his abode in Cumberland. I ventured to suggest that he would find himself too much alone—too much cut off from the stirring intellectual life and progressive thought of the capital. “But,” he replied, “the time has come to profit by the work of my last fifteen years; to enjoy the resources I have heaped up in order that my time of leisure might be free from all risk of weariness, uselessness, or rust. I shall find around me a few of the most original and independent of those thinkers who, not being reduced to ‘daily scribble for their daily bread,’ yet have not descended to that level of popularity which brings them within sight of the downward-cast eyes of Fame. Nor need you fear that I shall lose sight of London, and fall out of the healthy current of contemporary thought, or beyond the reach of wholesome criticism. I shall be sometimes in town; I shall always be able to ask friends to stay with me for a week or a month, as I will. I shall neither rust in idleness nor grow crotchety in solitude.”

He bought an estate of some twenty acres, overlooking one of the most beautiful of the Cumbrian lakes; superintended its laying out, planned and gave orders in minute detail both for the building and furnishing of his house, and went abroad till the place should be habitable, according to his own ideas of comfort and elegance, which could in nowise tolerate a raw stone dwelling or a garden bare of shrubs and flowers. He had been abroad for four years, with brief intervals, when he announced to me his marriage with a young girl, scarcely seventeen, the orphan child of one of the most distinguished soldiers of the Southern Confede-

racy. "You will be surprised," said he, "that I should have chosen so young a wife. But I have always held that a man does best not to marry till he is thirty, and that a girl can hardly marry too young. In the first place, men are much younger of their age than women. Most of us are almost boys at twenty-five; many of them are almost women at eighteen. We are in the prime of life at forty-five; they have passed it at thirty. And again, if a wife is to adapt herself, her ways, her tastes to a husband's—especially when marrying a foreigner and a man of strongly marked individuality—she must be married young. A woman of five-and-twenty and a man of five-and-thirty have each formed their habits of thought and life; if they are to live easily together, they must be more independent of each other than man and wife should be. And finally, of all forms of superiority, age is the most willingly recognised; and a wayward girl will be more easily guided by a man than by a youth. If her husband be her playfellow, she may be very happy at first, but her happiness will be in greater peril when the time of difficulty and differences shall arrive."

And now I held in my hand a letter from Cleveland, inviting me, in very cordial terms, to spend my summer holidays at Ferndale Holm. I had looked for no chance half so good—if only his wife should have the good sense and good taste to make herself and her home pleasant to her husband's old friends. And I accepted gladly.

It was evening, and the sky was olive-green and pale blue, the clouds wore every shade of rose and pink, yellow and gold, in the fading glow of the sunset,

as my car drove up the road which threaded the valley or glen, near the highest part of which, and sheltered from the north and west by mountains upon whose upper slopes the departed sun's light still lingered, lay the woods of Ferndale Holm. Of the house itself, situated at the top of a gentle ascent, I now caught and now lost sight, as the road ascended a hill, or passed through long defiles shadowed by spreading trees. We entered by a plain wooden gate, and passed along a broad avenue cut through the woods; not direct to the house, but bending in such a way that you lost sight of the public road almost as soon as you left it, and did not see the house till you had almost reached it. The lawns and gardens which parted it from the plantations sloped down for about a hundred yards to the edge of the brushwood; broken by clumps of shrubs and large shady trees, and bounded on three sides by a wide shallow stream, which flowed along an artificial course, the roses and lilies dipping into the water from one bank, the hazels, ash-trees, beeches, and willows shadowing it on the other. Along the front of the house ran a broad terrace, underneath which were discernible the lighted windows of the servants' quarters, screened by shrubs from the garden below. The main body of the house was built in the form of a quadrangle on a single floor, surmounted by square turret-like rooms at each corner. Entering by a lobby from the porch on the eastward, I passed into a gallery which gave access to all the four sides. The centre of the quadrangle was occupied by a large interior hall lighted from above. Immediately round the hall, parted from it by a wall pierced by Gothic arches, ran the gallery. From this,

on the south front, opened the sitting-rooms, looking on the terrace, and of good size; dining-room and library at the corners, projecting a little; drawing-room and boudoir between them. On the north side the corners were occupied by apartments shut off from the rest of the house, and opening only into narrow passages, running at right angles from the gallery. Both corners projected considerably beyond the line of the north front; one of these quasi-wings including the rooms of the host and hostess, the other the nurseries. The centres of the north and west sides were occupied by bedrooms for frequent guests: the interior hall—with a billiard-table in the centre and couches in each corner—was arranged as a conservatory; its walls covered and its four portals wreathed with numerous creepers, chiefly flowering ornaments of tropical or subtropical rocks, defiles, or forests. On the east, beside the entrance, were a study, pantry, and small staircase leading to the turret over the south-east corner. This was the smoking-room; the other turrets formed respectively a laboratory, museum, and observatory. Of course I did not perceive all these arrangements at the moment of my entrance; indeed, I saw none of them. As the drawing-room door opened, Algernon Cleveland stepped forward to welcome me, and introduce me to his wife.

She was now about one-and-twenty; still very slight, and so small, and fair, and fresh, that she would have been childish in appearance but for the sweet gravity of her expression, the breadth of the smooth forehead, the prominence of the eyebrows, and the depth of feeling in the soft brown eyes—eyes as lovely as any I have

seen in a woman's face, and scarcely to be surpassed in beauty by those of a dog ; for, after all, in that chiefest of beauties the dogs certainly excel humanity. She had not adopted the hideous fashions of the day : her dress of plain white muslin, neither expanded by artificial stiffening, nor tightened to the masculine likeness of trousers, allowed one to discern the exquisite outline of her slender figure, and no more ; her modestly braided hair, itself rarely beautiful in its rich brown hue just tinged with gold, formed, as it were, a setting to one of the loveliest faces I have ever seen. Graceful, quiet, a little silent and reserved, without being cold enough to repel, or shy enough to embarrass a guest,—her courteous and cordial greeting, uttered in a low sweet voice, at once set me at ease as regarded her, and made me feel that, pleasant as Cleveland's bachelor dwelling had always been to his friends, his married home would be tenfold more charming. Ah! how rarely that is so! How few wives have at once the good feeling that impels, and the good taste and tact that enable them so to receive the friends of a husband's youth that they shall feel themselves no losers by his marriage. And yet there are few points of conjugal duty so important to the maintenance of true conjugal confidence and love. For he who feels that his home is not attractive to his old friends, is estranged from it alike by sentiment and by conscience : he is ashamed, he is hurt, he is angry ; and as the fault is one difficult to reprove in explicit terms, as well as one of which many a man would scruple to accuse a wife, unspoken, suppressed resentment rankles the more deeply and lastingly ; and one thought at least of that man's heart

remains to his dying day a thought of censure and displeasure towards his wife: one fact, repeatedly forced upon him, interferes with his satisfaction in her, and his esteem for her—perpetually reminds him that she has failed both in love and in duty. His other affections, instead of confirming and supporting his love for her, contend against it, and the very tenacity and tenderness of his nature render him less tender towards her.

I spent more than a fortnight in this, one of the happiest homes I have ever known; the pleasantest time, at once quiet and full, that I have enjoyed for twenty years. Each day there spent taught me more fully to appreciate my friend's marital choice, whether due to wisdom or good fortune. I have seen very many marriages that must certainly have been made in heaven, in so far that their success was due to no human prudence; since the husband—choosing without a shadow of reason, and in more than one instance not guided by that instinctive judgment or natural attraction in which lies often the soundest and truest wisdom—had nevertheless wedded the one woman out of all the world best fitted to render his home what, had he chosen thoughtfully and deliberately, he would have wished to make it. Certainly, however, the great majority of unions appear to have been planned in a very different place, and controlled by that Infernal Providence whose operation, now and then apparent to a hasty observer in the arrangements of external nature, is in the ordinary course of human life, public and private, much more easily traced than that of the Celestial. Probably Cleveland owed as much to a thoroughly sound instinct, and a taste formed

by years of familiar intercourse with cultivated women, as to the sort of carefully-reasoned choice he supposed himself to have exercised. Not improbably, again, he owed most of all to the tact, disciplined temper, and thoroughly kindly nature which had guided his management of the impulsive, warm-hearted Southern child as she grew up into the gentle, thoughtful, dignified young matron. In much, doubtless, he had simply discerned and profited by the excellence of the material with which Providence had furnished him. In much he had moulded that material to the perfection of the woman before me.

But my friend's domestic life is not the subject of the present volume. The latter exists only because it has been for years my habit to record in my journal—somewhat after the manner of the late Mr. Senior—conversations that have, for whatever reason, much interested me. During my stay at Ferndale Holm, few days passed of which some part was not spent in listening to discussions wherein my host and other men of exceptional views or peculiar experience debated problems familiar or recondite, practical or speculative, in which, for one reason or another, I was led to share their interest. The perfect frankness and fearlessness of their views was less striking than it would have appeared a few years ago; for now-a-days no heresy however glaring, no moral or theological paradox however startling, is liable to involve the utterer in any unpleasant social consequences. What seemed to me most characteristic in these discussions was the disposition of Cleveland and several of his friends to regard the received doctrines of the scientific and sceptical

world—the intellectual vanguard of the age—with an indifference not less profound or an antagonism not less vivid than that they displayed in canvassing the fundamental tenets of old-fashioned orthodoxy. They seemed to me not less willing to maintain moral paradoxes offensive to the enlightened conscience of the nineteenth century, or religious views now denounced by nearly all independent or advanced thinkers as antiquated superstitions, than to set at naught the creeds of the churches and the intellectual bequests of the schoolmen. Cleveland especially, while evincing a strong conservative temper, felt and expressed no greater and no less respect for ancient doctrine and popular principles than for the crudest novelties of social theorists or scientific pretenders. He would maintain the most unpopular or defend the tritest thesis with equal coolness, and with an equally profound contempt for the public judgment. I never met a man on whose mind the law *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, had less influence. I know many whom it rather provokes to resistance than compels to respect, but few or none who, like Cleveland, were able simply and utterly to dismiss it as a thing without bearing or argumentative weight in any discussion, practical or speculative. At the same time, he displayed for the deliberate judgment of a master in any branch of knowledge upon his own special subject, a deference too seldom shown by minds so independent and self-reliant. The title I have given to this record of our conversations was suggested by the only weakness or vice that seemed to taint or bias their tenor; a disposition to challenge or rebel against any view commended by the authority of mere numbers;

whether the majority against whom the speakers revolted were that of a mere populace, or of the most authoritative writers and thinkers of the age. But among us all Cleveland was the least disposed to assume the position of the Devil's Advocate; the least inclined to manifest even so much regard for the judgment of the many as is implied in the marked dislike and defiance which is now-a-days the characteristic attitude of the student or philosopher towards the prejudices of the vulgar and the pretensions of those whose eminence depends on public favour.

CHAPTER II.

DE REBUS: ET——

As we sate at breakfast on the first morning of my visit the parlour-maid—Cleveland declined to keep a man-servant indoors—brought in the letters, and with them a file of evening papers. These were laid on a side-table.

“You probably saw these yesterday afternoon,” said Cleveland. “For our evening papers are all published at a time when the fashionable world, at least, has hardly half got through its morning; and you may get them, even at Manchester, before sunset. I often wondered whether a real evening paper, containing only the news of the same day, and mainly occupied with comment, political and literary, might not be made a success, as it would certainly be a novelty.”

“It would be cheap, certainly. I suppose a half sheet would be ample.”

“Yes. You will get the morning’s papers in time to read them all before dinner, if you care to read them now. But if I were you, I don’t think I should look at a newspaper till I got home again.”

“I wish I dared follow your advice. But how many do you take?”

"All, except the publicans' organ and the —. They represent no party, and contain nothing that one will not find elsewhere. In the *Banner* you get the Tory account of the world's progress; the Radical in the *News*; and in the *Times* you see what the world thinks of itself and its party critics. It is a favourite amusement of mine to cut out the three statements of the same case, and paste them side by side; keeping them to compare years afterwards, when the party spirit has gone out of the partisans, and the world has forgotten that it ever cared about the subject."

"And which do you read, Mrs. Cleveland?"

"Can you ask a Louisianian?" she said. "Of course all my heart goes with the one journal that not only stood by us till our last army capitulated and our last garrison surrendered, but has spoken of the Lost Cause with sympathy and respect ever since. The *Times* was with us till we lost hope; and then went over to the enemy with a facility of conviction which I did not think possible to human nature. As for the *News*, it was in Yankee pay from the first, and earned its wages by reviling us while we fought, and exulting over us when we fell. And it pretends to be the advocate of liberty, and the champion of nationalities!"

"I must enter a protest against your censures, Mrs. Cleveland, heartily as I share your feelings. I have given and taken many shrewd blows in your cause, and I must do justice to an honest enemy. The *News* is the organ of a class of Liberals who are simply fanatical where colour is concerned. They are always for the black man against the white, be the merits of the quarrel what they may. They had abused American slavery

when slavery was apparently triumphant; and if they were ungenerous in their exultation over the fallen people, they were at least sincere and consistent. As for bribes—that is one of the delusions which one can pardon only in a foreigner. The journals which took the side of the South were accused of being paid for their advocacy; I know that the charge was false as applied to them, and I am sure that it is equally false as applied to the most honest of their adversaries. The English press has its faults; but its hands are clean, and its conduct, right or wrong, is thoroughly independent.”

“I agree with you,” answered Cleveland,—“though I must except individual proprietors—so far as bribes are concerned. The only English journal that was ever known to take the pay and wear the livery of a foreign Power died almost at once of its servility. But ‘independence’ is a quality that cannot be predicated of the press without reserves. It is—the London journals, at any rate, are—independent of actual control from without. Each paper can, if it pleases, take what tone its conductors choose. But each is so connected with particular parties and men that it rarely ventures on a course that is really its own. So close is this connection that I have been repeatedly amused by the prolonged endeavours of each independent organ, from the *Times* downwards, to write a succession of articles on some new topic without committing itself to any definite opinion that might fail to square with the ultimate decision of a secret Cabinet or a wavering Opposition.”

“Granting that it is so—and it is so only in part, for

each of our principal journals has from time to time differed with its usual guides on any but great party issues—that involves no impeachment of their independence. The most independent man who is a true Conservative or a true Liberal will hardly vote against his party on a question on which the fortunes of the party depend. He feels that scarcely any single question can be so important as the general interests of the cause; the strengthening of the force by which alone his political faith can be made triumphant.”

“No doubt that is the view which the journalists themselves take of the case. But, without inquiring how far an individual partisan acts well and wisely in going with his cause against his conviction, the position of a newspaper differs essentially from that of a political leader, whatever his personal relation with party. It assumes the air of independence, it speaks *ex cathedra*, in the language not of an advocate but of a judge. It professes to criticise the struggle from without, not to bear a part in it and to regard it from within. In many respects—as in reporting speeches or giving news—it is expected to maintain and does maintain something very like impartiality. If it be all the time fettered to the views of a particular statesman or set of statesmen, it is playing a part—and not a very creditable one. And, after all, your argument goes not to show that newspapers are independent, but to show that they cannot and need not be so.”

“You do not join, then, in the nineteenth century pæans in honour of a free press?”

“If there be one thing that I never did and never shall join in, it is that self-idolatry which renders this

age, I verily think, the most ridiculous that has been endured since the Fall! I think we may fairly say that every period over which those who lived in it were disposed to be peculiarly vainglorious and ostentatiously thankful was a period of rapid decay. If there were a time in Greek history when a people so subtle, gifted with so keen a sense of the ridiculous, could have fallen into such a folly, it was the age of Demosthenes; the age of peace, philosophy, and prosperity which followed the hard honest struggle of the Peloponnesian War, and made way for the showy conquests of Philip and Alexander, and the Asiatic tyranny of their successors. The Romans never took to self-laudation—never fancied themselves wiser than their fathers, or the new time better than the old—until their fathers' virtue had gone out of them. Ovid, and Horace, and Virgil bepraised the Augustan age as we are praising the nineteenth century; and the Augustan age prepared the Roman people to be the bondsmen of Tiberius and the flatterers of Nero; to kiss the shoes of Caligula, and crouch beneath the axes of Domitian. I am by no means sure that I do not discern a similar tendency in this boasted century of our own, especially when I consider the special subjects of our exultation—

‘For we throw out exclamations of self-thanking, self-admiring,

With, at every mile run faster, “Oh the wondrous, wondrous age!”

—Never thinking if we work our souls as nobly as our iron,
Or if angels will commend us at the goal of pilgrimage.’

As to a free press:—of course, it must be free. An enslaved press is an instrument powerful only for mis-

chief; a guide with his eyes bound, led by the hand of an enemy. But I confess that I do doubt whether the world is much the better for all that newspapers have done—at any rate, whether it would not be better still if they had achieved far less, and been forced to content themselves with a humbler position. I doubt whether that society can be in a safe or healthy state which is so largely influenced by men irresponsible alike to law and to opinion, whose very names it does not know, and who, from the nature and conditions of their profession, can have only a superficial, crammed, incidental knowledge of the things they undertake to teach.”

“I must say, Cleveland, that I should be inclined to question all your epithets. How can you say that the press is irresponsible alike to law and to opinion?”

“Well, in what sense is it responsible to the law? The civil law can give damages against the proprietor, who has rarely anything to do with the insertion of a libel. The criminal law can imprison the printer and publisher, who are mere servants, and have nothing whatever to do with the offence for which they suffer. You cannot reach the writer, nor even the editor. And how can men be effectively responsible to opinion whose names are not known to the world?”

“But the newspaper has an entity of its own, with which the feelings of those who conduct it are closely entwined. If the journal brings itself under public censure, or under judicial sentence, the editor probably feels it almost as keenly as if he were tried and condemned in his proper person.”

“True in part; and that is the only check we have.

Each paper of standing has as such a character to lose, a reputation to sustain. But this very fact, again, interferes with any true personal responsibility. Will you tell me which of you really feels himself answerable for an article in your journal as he would for a speech of his own or a letter of his own? Not the writer; for he never can say all that he thinks exactly as he thinks it; he writes with his hands tied, and therefore he is not responsible. The proprietor? No; he has nothing to do with it, except to keep a general supervision over the editor, and take care, in so far as he can, not to stumble upon a libel. The editor? He again is not his own master; he has modified that sentence to suit a crotchet of the proprietor, cut out a phrase here and inserted another there to bring the article into accord, not with his own views, but with that very impersonal personality of which you speak, the traditional character and principles of his journal. The resulting article is not the true expression of anybody's views, and no one feels really responsible for it. There is no one who so far identifies himself with it that you can call him knave or liar, because it states as truth that which you know him to regard as falsehood:—no one who considers himself liable for it *in foro conscientie*, though he may admit his liability in law or in honour. And I cannot think it a satisfactory thing that society should be guided and nations in great measure governed by teachings which represent no real living opinion, and for which no man considers himself really answerable to God and man."

"But, after all, Cleveland, most articles do express in the main the earnest individual opinions of the

writer ; and the general tone of the paper corresponds with the views of the editor. No wise man will commit either the conduct of a paper or the writing of an argument to one who will go to work with half a will and a doubting conscience."

"Granted. But not one article in five expresses frankly the whole of the writer's view of the subject, and no series of articles ever does. So that the general result—the newspaper as a continuing teacher—represents nobody's real and entire convictions. If it expressed the judgment of each writer on his own special topics, it would be entitled to some little weight ; but what it does give is the judgment of each as modified and restrained by half-a-dozen different conditions, no one of which has anything to do with the truth or with the merits of the question. Again, it must in a majority of cases be the teaching, even at best, of a man who has got up the subject at second hand because he suddenly found himself called upon to instruct others therein ; and who, so situated, takes upon him to criticise and dissect the arguments or counsels of men some of whom probably have made it the study of a lifetime. And, finally, he writes without such check as the fear of ridicule may apply. He may criticise Herschel's *Astronomy* or correct Murchison's *Geology*, set Lord Salisbury right in diplomacy or Lord Cairns in law, without fear that any one will ask, 'Who is this who knows so much better than those who ought to know best?' and expose his insignificance and conceit to the laughter of the public. I venture to think that there are many leading articles and reviews published every week whose authors would blush to their temples at the

thought of speaking to their nearest friends, in their own persons, in the tone of presumptuous authority they have not scrupled to assume when addressing the world at large in the name of the *Times* or the *Athenæum*."

"Then you would wish to do away with the anonymous principle of English journalism, and have every man sign his articles, as in France?"

"I do not know. There is always a strong presumption in favour of a practice which has grown out of the natural tendencies of a profession, and has maintained itself for centuries, or at least for generations. There is always a strong presumption against the wisdom of interfering with such natural tendencies by legislative regulation. But if our English press should show serious signs of a deterioration towards the American level—[the fact that the worst and most American of our journals is the most popular, suggests the possibility of such a thing]—I should then be inclined to ask myself whether it were not desirable to protect private life against invasion and society against demoralisation by some such effective check on newspaper license. As things are now, I doubt whether it would not be well to oblige every newspaper to publish the names of editor and proprietor. And even at present, without saying that I would compel the signature, I certainly should prefer it."

"I can't agree with you. In the first place, are you not rather hard on the American press? Is not one-half of the contempt expressed for it due to the meanness of its appearance—the wretched type and miserable

paper—which is inseparable from extreme cheapness and aggravated by a protective tariff?”

“No doubt a low and dirty exterior does prejudice one against man or journal. But the impertinent personalities of the Yankee press, its reckless party falsehoods, and its shameless intrusions into the sphere of individual privacy, would be no less odious if they were printed in the type of the *Saturday Review* on the best cream-laid paper. But go on.”

“I was about to say,” I replied, “that we gain greatly in moderation of tone and temper by the present system, which puts an absolute control into the editorial hands. If I sign my articles, I must of course write as I please: I cannot put my name to the editorial corrections, or adapt my views to the traditions of the paper. Now it stands to reason that an editor will be more moderate and careful than a contributor. In the first place, his special function is moderation—to keep his staff within bounds. In the next, he probably feels less strongly about any given question than the man to whom he commits it precisely because that man has taken a special interest in it. And even if the editor be as eager as the contributor, he is not carried away by the excitement of writing: the spicy bits, the stinging sarcasms, the fiery invectives, are not his, and he has no vanity of authorship, no paternal affection, to restrain him from spoiling them—to the great advantage of the newspaper—or striking them out altogether.”

“True,” said Cleveland. “On the other hand, under the anonymous system, we have far less thorough and careful work than we should have if men attached their names to what they write. The pride which every

man takes in work recognized as his own, his ambition to achieve a reputation in connection with particular questions, his dislike to associate his name with rubbish or ribaldry, with superficial twaddle or commonplace, would induce him to study his subjects much more deeply, to reflect much longer and more carefully, to write far more thoughtfully and accurately, than he will do when his only motive—apart from his real interest in an imperfectly mastered topic—is to satisfy the editorial standard. I have always noticed that a series of “headed articles,” which may achieve even an ephemeral notice apart from the general credit of the journal in which they appear, are more carefully and thoroughly written than the same man’s leading articles; while the best of all are the letters written under a transparent pseudonym on some exciting question of the day by practised journalists, who have made that question their own not as journalists, but as politicians, professed students, or even as amateurs. You and I have seen a good many “leaders” from our friend —. Which of them was comparable to his letters in the *Times* over the signature of — ?”

“And yet I don’t find that those magazines whose writers sign their essays are the best written. *Blackwood* is superior, and *Fraser* equal, to *Macmillan*.”

“*Blackwood* commands the best writers in England, and many of the articles in *Fraser* are signed. Of course some anonymous writings will be better than some that bear a signature. Men like Lord Lytton and ‘Cornelius O’Dowd’ will write better, even when they are writing anonymously for *Blackwood*, than you or I can do when we write under our own names. Be-

sides, my strictures were meant to apply to newspapers, and especially daily newspapers, rather than to periodicals like *Blackwood* and the *Quarterly*. The articles in magazines and reviews of the higher class are often—perhaps generally—written by men who have a real knowledge of their subject, and have not ‘got it up’ because they had to write upon it. And though they are anonymous, the authorship of a noteworthy paper becomes known so widely that there is every motive to do your best. A man can make a reputation by writing for the reviews; he cannot do so by writing professionally for the newspapers. And even when the writer is unknown, he hears the article spoken of as an individual work, and enjoys the praise as his own. A first-rate paper in the *Quarterly* makes almost as much noise as a first-rate book, and the author gains as much fame in literary circles. But if an article in the *Times* or the *Standard* be ever so good, it gains no individual credit; it is only ‘The *Times* is very good this morning;’ and the honour, such as it is, goes rather to the editor than to the contributor.”

“At anyrate you will admit, Cleveland, that the rule of anonymity is so entwined with our whole system, that to change it would change the whole character of the press.”

“Not quite. It would make a great change, and I think a change for the better. It would give reputation to good writers, and a far better position to writers of established reputation. At present they are at the mercy of the proprietors. Then they would treat on equal terms; for a first-rate writer, if he seceded, might take half the *clientèle* of the newspaper with him. And I, for one,

Anonymity.

should be glad to see intellect placed at this advantage in its dealings with capital. And, again, this signature would introduce into the influence of the press a new and a higher element—the weight of authority; or, at anyrate, would give that element its proper place. At present, the *Times* or the *Quarterly* may have, as such, a certain authority; people believe a thing more readily because the *Times* or the *Quarterly* has said it. But look behind the scenes; and you may find that the authority belongs to a flippant scribbler and an adroit editor, whose two names together have not a tithe of the weight that attaches to that of the unknown writer of yonder unnoticed reply in the *Scotsman* or the *Student*.”

“It is generally said that the peculiar virtue of the anonymous system is that it does away with the weight of a mere *ipse dixit*, and gives to each writer just so much power and influence as his arguments are worth.”

“It is often so said,” replied Cleveland sharply, “and perhaps no sillier sentence was ever uttered by one clever idiot, to be echoed by a million of stupid ones. Saw man ever such a completeness and fulness of error in so few words? First, you don’t get rid of the weight of an *ipse dixit*; but you give that weight to a journal rather than to a person; to a man you don’t know, at haphazard, rather than to one you do know. Take the case of the only Radical paper—perhaps the sole weekly paper—which carries real weight in printed controversy; which educated journalists, politicians, men of letters or of science, read with attention; the only one probably which you or I would care to study at leisure, or to answer unless writing for bread. That

paper frequently contains partisan ribaldry, vulgar abuse, or disingenuous evasion which would deeply damage it but for the high repute attaching to a single name. Withdraw that name, and the weight it gives to every article in the paper, though not written by that one man, and who would read his journal's philippics on foreign policy, or colonial questions, or finance, save to laugh at them? Three articles in four in that journal derive all their weight and influence from a fiction. From what journal do intelligent men of business seek guidance in the mazes of political finance? It owes its paramount authority to two or three men at most, all of whom are either dead or have long ceased to write its comments or direct its course. You take the word of the *Saturday Review* on a question of history or philosophy for gospel; and it may be the word of a Max Müller or a Cox, or it may be the word of a young student fresh from the University. And next, forsooth, articles have just the influence that belongs to the intrinsic value of their arguments! Of course, then, reckless insinuation and audacious falsehood never mislead the reader; he is never deluded by sophistry, or taken in by claptrap, or demoralised by appeals to a morbid sentiment or an ignorant prejudice? Why, how many newspaper readers know what value to ascribe to an argument? To find that value is the arch-problem of logic, the very highest achievement of intellect. And above all, what do we gain by the supposed substitution of reasoning for authority? Not one in ten of the readers of a newspaper is sufficiently acquainted with the subjects it discusses to be able intelligently to estimate and accurately to check its

assertions or its inferences. But five in ten know enough of books and men to be acquainted with authorities they can safely trust as masters of the question in hand; know, not what men have deserved reputation as such, and how, but what men are esteemed wisest by those who are wise enough to judge. And, therefore, they are more capable of appreciating the *ipse dixit* of a master than the argument of a scholar, and more likely to be guided aright thereby. You and I know, perhaps, as much of astronomy as ordinary newspaper readers know of any public question. Suppose we read an anonymous argument in a scientific paper, or more probably in a magazine, which seems to us to prove that the nearest fixed star is only thirty times as far away as the sun; and suppose that the next day Airy or Norman Lockyer writes three lines to say that the argument in question is sheer nonsense,—should we dream of setting our estimate of the reasoning against the astronomer's *ipse dixit*? And yet I incline to think that, depth for depth, we understand an astronomical argument about as well as average men of business understand a political one."

"You believe, then, that authority is a safer guide for mankind than argument?"

"I believe that men who have intellect and leisure to make themselves thoroughly masters of any given branch of knowledge will do far better to study it for themselves, and to refrain from forming any opinions thereupon till they have mastered it, than to sit down content with the authoritative decisions of any man, however gifted. Indeed, only men who think for themselves contribute to the progress of knowledge, and keep up a

succession of 'authorities' on a level with that progress, and entitled to our confidence. But if a man have not the ability or have not the time really to understand a subject—to understand it not only in the immediate aspect in which it may influence his conduct, but from the foundation upwards, knowing all the considerations that affect it, and all the sciences that bear effectively upon it—he would do far better to put himself in the hands of the ablest and most honest adviser he can find, than to attempt to form a judgment for himself from the conflicting arguments of a variety of counsellors, whose knowledge he cannot test, whose ignorance he cannot fathom, and whose arguments may mislead him by their very soundness, if they are based on premises whose untruth he cannot detect.”

“We should all admit that, of course, in respect to professional sciences. He who is his own lawyer has a fool for his client; and he who is his own doctor is likely soon to lose his patient. A man, the more he knows of the real difficulty of law or medicine, is the more disposed to abide implicitly by the advice of a profound lawyer or a thorough physician. But the case is a little altered when we come to matters not scientific, on which the professional doctors differ radically; and on which therefore every man is almost obliged, if not to have an opinion, at least to choose a line of action or select a master. In morals, in religion, in politics, would you have an average, educated Englishman give up his judgment to the guidance of another?”

“In morals and religion,” interposed Mrs. Cleveland,

"is there not a consideration of responsibility which makes it almost impossible for him to do so? He must answer for his own faith and conduct. That he has made a mistake, trying to do what he thought right, may be a sufficient plea; that he has done what seemed to him wrong in deference to a wiser man than himself would be no excuse whatever."

"I am not so sure of that, Ida," replied Cleveland. "His duty surely is to take the best means in his power of coming to a right conclusion. Now, if A is convinced that B understands the matter better than he does, or than any one else to whom he has access, it would seem that his best chance of coming to a right conclusion is to be guided by B. If he goes by his own opinion, he wilfully neglects a better means of framing a decision than that which he adopts. But I will leave ethics and divinity aside for the nonce—only remarking that nothing is more rare than a man or woman who has really formed an independent, original judgment upon the fundamental principles of either. In politics, it seems to me the worst among the many bad symptoms of the time, that we are fast losing all reverence for any authority but one—that of the majority. We act, at any rate, as if we believed that a popular vote could decide not only what is to be done, but what ought to be done. We find our newspapers, for instance, constantly taunting the Conservatives with their opposition to Catholic Emancipation, to the Repeal of the Corn Laws, to this or that measure of the past, as if it were a proof of misjudgment. And in what sense a proof? Not that Catholic Emancipation has been successful: not that it has not been followed

by every consequence that rational Conservatives predicted and cautious Liberals denied: not that it has given us a better set of Irish representatives, or a more loyal people, or a less factious priesthood—but simply because the principle of religious equality is now generally admitted, and, therefore, all resistance to it is assumed to have been always an error. Ministers hardly scruple to tell us that they did this or that, knowing it to be wrong, because public opinion—that is, a temporary majority—insisted upon it. We see armies increased in time of panic, and diminished in time of indifference, by men who all the while scarcely conceal their belief that armies are a useless luxury; but then 'the country will have it so.' Every man whose opinion on military subjects is worth an iota, from the Duke of Wellington downwards, told us for thirty years that we were in a position of fearful danger: but no heed was paid to their authority, and not only our Gladstones and our Cardwells but every little pothouse oracle and club politician assumed to understand war better than generals, and to pooh-pooh the judgment of the greatest soldiers upon questions purely military. Every shopkeeper fancies himself competent to form an opinion upon the gravest and most complicated questions of policy, and never dreams of distrusting that opinion because he finds that a neighbour who has made such questions the study of a lifetime, and is recognised as the ablest living writer thereupon, has pronounced an entirely opposite judgment. A local preacher whose knowledge is limited to the English translation of the Bible, a Methodist commentary, two volumes of sermons and Wesley's

hymns, will undertake to propound his views of the connection of Church and State with a confident belief in his own competence and the soundness of his conclusions that would be very laughable if it had not grave practical results. Men who never read the history of the Reformation will coolly lay down the law respecting the Church's title to her property: and men who know as much of political economy as of Arabic will agitate for a "free breakfast table," and would be amazed if you told them that they had not and could not have the shadow of a reason for thinking that they were rendering a service, or that they might not be helping to inflict a grave injury upon the country."

"But surely, Cleveland, the supremacy of a majority is the only possible basis of a constitutional government; and evil as may be the consequences of entrusting the decision of political questions to political ignorance, they form the necessary price of political freedom."

"No. The modern *theory* of representation is, that the electors choose those of their neighbours whom they believe most honest, most able, most worthy to act for them. If they undertake to act for themselves, and send to the Legislature men fettered and pledged to speak, not their own mind, but the mind of those who sent them, representation has degenerated into delegation. And the *history* of constitutional government is briefly that which Carlyle has stated. The ancient parliaments of all nations were assemblies of the chiefs who governed under the king, the great men of provinces, districts, towns, each one of whom either was a

substantive power in himself, or spoke on known issues the mind of his borough; and it was from that substantive power that their votes derived value and efficacy. The king wanted the assent of such a Parliament to his laws, because that assent alone could give the political and military strength to enforce them. And despite all alterations, down to 1832, our Parliament was a substantive power of this kind, comprising, in one way or another, most of the individual and corporate elements of national force. The modern practice, which makes the House of Commons a mere assemblage of individual citizens, sent to speak the words put into their mouths by the strongest section of the busybodies and club-orators of their several boroughs, is a novelty not only not necessary to constitutional government or political liberty, but, as I shrewdly suspect, incompatible with the permanent maintenance of either."

"Surely, though it may be neither necessary nor desirable that the electors should consider and pronounce upon the details of political measures, you must allow them to decide upon questions of general principle. They must take into account in choosing a representative whether his views of broad and distinct issues of policy, his notions of the leading principles of legislation, agree with their own. You could not expect a Tory to vote for a man however honest and able who advocates the disestablishment of the Church, or a Liberal to ignore the fact that the candidate of the highest moral and intellectual calibre was hostile to the opening of the universities."

"I know at least that they will not. And thus we are fast coming to the worst of all forms—the ultimate

and inevitable development—of democracy; government by *plebiscites*. For what is a general election fought upon a particular question but a *plebiscite*? What was the election of 1831 but a *plebiscite* upon the Reform Bill? What was that of 1868 but a *plebiscite* upon the Irish Church? And so rapidly are we nearing the goal that the House of Lords itself unconsciously accepts a *plebiscite* as the proper mode of deciding a political dispute, and conceives itself entitled to reject a bill, however often sent up by the Commons, until a popular vote has been taken upon it at the hustings; and no longer. The Peers of England resist the oft-repeated deliberate independent judgment and constitutional authority of a body chiefly consisting of educated English gentlemen; they bow at once to the hasty decision and unconstitutional pretensions of a rabble—for since 1868 the control of two-thirds of the constituencies rests with the mere rabble or populace. You say that the public, though unfit to pronounce on legislative details, can appreciate and decide upon political principles. Is it quite clear that what we call ‘political principles’ are safe rules of practical action? But look how this idea of referring to the constituencies the decision of political principles works. The leaders of parties can no longer rely on the practical soundness of an institution—the practical success of a policy. The multitude cannot judge of these; and so these real tests of political wisdom go for nothing when opposed to some ‘principle’ that happens to catch the popular ear. Therefore the manufacture of political principles becomes the main business of party chiefs and the effective means of government. Plausible phrases take

the place of practical reasons; great questions of policy are decided, and the course of imperial legislation determined by such claptrap catchwords as 'religious equality,' 'fair play for talent' (competitive examination), 'promotion by merit,' 'payment by results'—I need not go on. You, as a journalist, know the cant terms of the last twenty years by heart. When once one of these phrases is fairly set afloat, reasoning is at an end. What would it have availed to show that what the Roman Catholics wanted in 1868 was not religious equality, but the confiscation of their neighbours' goods? What assembly would listen to an argument in favour of ministerial responsibility or Parliamentary patronage in regard to appointments in the Civil Service? Nay, which of the men who in private admit the advantages of both would venture on the hustings to vindicate them? Who could induce a popular audience to understand that promotion by merit is too likely to mean promotion by favour, or that payment by results, like competitive examination, means rewards for cramming? All these things are recognised in political circles; men of sound judgment and administrative experience, however radical, only say that the certain evils of the old system outweigh the probable perils of the new. On each of the questions I have cited as examples, there is, to say the least, no preponderance of authority on the side of so-called reform; but, as against the new popular "principles," conservative authority could not even obtain a hearing. A statesman with a gift for the manufacture of principles—and such an one was lately, if he be not now, the most powerful man in England—may lead us into almost any depth of absurdity or

iniquity; and all practical criticism, all argument as to consequences, might as well be addressed to a deaf and dumb as to a popular audience."

"I agree with you, Cleveland," I answered. "I have not forgotten the battle of the Irish Church. I won't say that we were right, that is matter of opinion; but I will say that *all* the argument was on our side. I myself regard disendowment as a phrase exactly equivalent to 'robbery by Act of Parliament;' and the allegation that 'Church estates are national property' as an impudent fiction. Of course we might be utterly wrong, but ours were the presumptively just views; the burden of proof lay with the spoilers. Unless they could *prove* that Church property was held legally and morally at the will and pleasure of the majority; unless they could show a distinction, clear and certain, between legislative robbery and parliamentary disendowment,—they were, as every man who understands the elementary principles of English jurisprudence knows, utterly and unpardonably in the wrong. They never attempted even a show of proof; they simply repeated assertions *prima facie* false, and carried out their purpose by the brute force of numbers, ignorance, and passion.

"Our opponents did nothing but ring the changes on two phrases—'religious equality' and 'justice to Ireland.' We showed that religious equality had nothing to do with the question of disendowment: we showed that justice did not require us to despoil the minority of their property because the majority were poor; we showed that thirty years ago the Roman Catholics themselves had pronounced disendowment to be a sin, and had sworn never to ask for it. Not an

attempt was made to answer us. We appealed to history; we pointed to obvious consequences; we showed that the Protestants of Ulster always were, and always must be, the chief stay of Imperial authority in Ireland. Right or wrong, we never were answered. 'Justice to Ireland—religious equality;' we heard nothing else, until the passing of the bill was felt a relief from the intolerable ringing of those empty sounds in our ears."

"It is quite evident," said Cleveland after a pause, "that this fashion of inventing political principles to serve a party purpose is incompatible with anything like political stability. In the first place, the principles are always much too wide, and after they have fulfilled the object of their original inventor, are sure to be found to involve some corollary of which we never dreamt—most obnoxious, it may be, to himself and his principal supporters. Some more reckless and unscrupulous party leader, some ignorant and irresponsible demagogue, seizes on the principle, and draws from it conclusions logical but destructive. Even the Americans, with all their facility in devising and dismissing eternal truths adapted to the fancies of the day, have learnt by experience how much practical inconvenience may lurk in the most abstract and unpractical declaration of those 'inalienable rights' that mankind never yet enjoyed.

'When you've done all your real meanin' to smother,
The derved things 'll up and mean sunthin' or 'nuther.'

And again, inasmuch as great national institutions grow out of national history, and not out of abstract logic, they are apt to be obstinately illogical, and utterly refuse to accommodate themselves to 'principles' elaborated by

speculative ingenuity, and worked out to their logical consequences. As the principle is practically established, and is not—under the pains and penalties of political heresy—to be questioned, the institution is in the wrong, and it must go. I doubt if there be one single part of our system, social, domestic, or political, that would be defensible if tried according to logical rule by principles abstractly sound, or at any rate far less questionable than many of those that are now among the accepted axioms of English political reasoning. One thing, at anyrate, is perfectly clear—the House of Lords is an utterly illogical institution. That a man should be born to legal privileges and exemptions is anomalous enough; that he should be born a legislator, is preposterous. And yet this anomaly of hereditary power and privilege prevails, in some form, over one-half of the earth; has prevailed in all ages, and works so far, at least, as well as any more logical order of society. We, who confine all hereditary rank, power, and privilege to the eldest son, carry the principle one step further in logical absurdity and in practical wisdom than almost any other nation; for whatever may be said of inherited culture, and inherited virtues, it is not supposed that the eldest son inherits a double portion of his father's qualities. And yet it is precisely this especially and exceptionally illogical practice of ours that has made our aristocracy so much more real and so much more popular than any other; that has preserved a nobility from becoming a caste, and prevented its privileges being felt as a burden by the people."

"Do you believe in the House of Lords, Cleveland? I don't mean would you wish to keep it, as we have it;

but do you think it in itself a good institution—one which, having the material, it would be well to create?”

“Of course you hardly could have the material unless you had the House. A body of Peers not enjoying hereditary political power would not resemble the British Peerage. I don't know whether I would create such a second Chamber—that is a very complicated question. But I think it would be difficult to devise a better. Logically, of course, you must regard the Peers as simply four hundred rich men taken by chance; and then it seems very absurd to give them a veto on the acts of six hundred chosen by the whole nation. But look at the two Houses as they are, and you may take a different view. In the first place, the six hundred are not chosen for their wisdom or political experience, or generally as the best individual elements to compose the Collective Wisdom of the nation. Next, to form a second Chamber is the *crux* of modern Constitutions: ours is confessedly the best extant in Europe. The Roman Senate is the model of those who reject the hereditary principle, or have no hereditary material. And, after all, the House of Lords resembles that Senate more than is commonly discerned. Both contained the chiefs of great Patrician Houses. Both were recruited by the introduction of the leading politicians, lawyers, magistrates, and soldiers of each generation. In our case, no doubt, the choice is hampered by the hereditary tenure which too often confines it to rich or childless men. The point I make is this—that we do get in the House of Lords the very same personal elements that made the Roman Senate so excellent a deliberative assembly; so strong, so wise, and so

durable. But take even the hereditary Peers; I venture to say that there is as much political ability among them as in the House of Commons, together with a higher tone of character and culture, greater independence, and a calmer judgment. The debates are fewer shorter wiser more dignified, more distinguished by political if not by commercial knowledge and far less by claptrap, than in the other House; and the votes are quite as judicious. I greatly doubt whether in any ordinary crisis of the national life, so far as the essential work of Government is concerned, we could not spare the two front benches of the Commons better than those of the Lords."

"How do you account for this? For surely, on any calculus of chances, six hundred men chosen from six millions of families should be better than four hundred men chosen (or rather taken by lot) from four hundred families: and as to the leaders in either House, half-a-dozen men selected from all the nation *less* four hundred individuals ought to be superior to half-a-dozen who are simply the best of the four hundred."

"You must remember that the leaders of the Lower House are not chosen from the whole nation, but from that very small class of men who have the opportunity to get, before middle life, into the House. Still, the logic of probabilities is against me, on the assumption that the four hundred are average specimens of average families. I suspect the truth to be that the families of the Peerage are far above the average. In the first place, corruption and jobbery notwithstanding, most peerages (unless when a party in power has wished to swamp the Upper House) were given to men of real

eminence, and even faction has been forced to ennoble men of some repute. The founders, then, of these four hundred families were mostly superior men—often men of that kind of vigour stimulated rather than refined by culture which seems most permanently to reproduce itself. They have enjoyed a first-rate education, in school, at college, in the world—in short, have been highly cultivated—for generations. The head of the house in each generation has had his choice among the *élite* of the finest race of women in the world—the highborn and highbred ladies of England. They have been rich, too; never for many generations stunted in growth of brain or body by want, nor worried and harassed in manhood by the wasting, debasing anxieties of poverty; yet not enervated by exemption from practical cares.

“They have been proud of their rank, not after the Spanish, but after the old French fashion—*Noblesse oblige*. They have felt it incumbent upon them to hold their own as chiefs among men, to display courage and physical prowess in youth, manly sense and power in riper years. They have been accustomed to lead, and have acquired the tone and mental habit of men expected to think and act not only for themselves but for others. From such parents the heir to a peerage is born; he is stimulated by the examples of an illustrious ancestry and a sense of great responsibility—a sense which, as India has shown, seldom fails to bring out all that is good in an Englishman; he goes to school and college among the flower of English youth as an equal, yet feeling that he ought to approve himself something more; he lives from boyhood among the rulers of the

land, as one who may ere long be their colleague; he enjoys all the moral, intellectual, physical, and social culture that the wealthiest and most refined society of all nations can give. He is *not* an average man; and an assembly composed of such men may well contain more statesmen and natural chiefs than could be found among fifty times that number of successful merchants or shopkeepers, lawyers or farmers."

"You draw a flattering picture of the English nobleman. I fear many of them would hardly recognise it as a portrait."

"Of course not. I speak of that which it is the *tendency* of a peerage like ours to produce; of the advantages of an hereditary aristocracy over a yeomanry or *bourgeoisie*. Of course there will be Peers of whom nothing can make noblemen, as there are shopboys who will never make tradesmen, and sons of merchant princes unworthy to associate with an honest artisan. And, after all, the very purpose of my argument was to explain the admitted fact that the Peers *are*, as a body, more able and distinguished than the theory of probabilities seemed to allow. And that hereditary rank, among nations whose aristocracy still retain the traditions of Western chivalry, does tend to justify itself by such superiority, history certainly proves. Every such aristocracy has been able to hold its own against odds, or to fall with honour; its superiority confessed by the very animosity of its destroyers. Were it *not* superior in some solid sense, it would disappear in a single generation when deprived of wealth and privilege, and thus placed, externally, on a level with other classes ten times as numerous. Again, take royal

families; how many superior men they have produced. From first to last there can hardly have been fifty princes of the Plantagenet family. Take not fifty, but five hundred, educated Englishmen at random; what chance have you to find among them six such men as Henry II., Edward I., Edward III., the Black Prince, Henry V., Edward IV., Richard III.? All the Tudors were remarkable; and, fairly judged, even the Stuarts produced more than an average of ability. Remember the House of Orange in its brighter days. How many again of the descendants of Hugh Capet were men of more than the ordinary mental stature of Frenchmen? Remember St. Louis, Philip Augustus, Louis XI., Charles VIII., Francis I., Henry IV., Louis XIV., the Condés—for of course we must include the whole of each royal house, and not only the kings, inasmuch as superior ability sometimes brought a prince to the throne who was not first in the direct order of succession; and if we took the kings alone, we should be taking a class to some small extent selected for special abilities. Look at the old German Cæsars—all of royal blood; look at the Swedish House of Vasa. The descendants of Maria Theresa or of Philip of Orleans would be regarded, in a private station, as families of exceptional talent. The same may be said of the royal branch of the House of Hohenzollern, despite the strange mental taint which breaks out in every other generation; of the House of Savoy; in short, of nearly every royal house except the miserable degenerate Bourbons of Spain and Naples.

“I fear, however, that the new condition introduced by the rule—now adopted in almost every country—

which obliges princes to marry only into princely families, has already begun to prevail over the hereditary advantages of royalty. Such a limitation destroys one of the chief sources of aristocratic superiority—the preference enjoyed by nobles which enables them to secure superior women in marriage—and introduces in its stead that element of close-breeding than which hardly any vice or error is more effective in deteriorating and extinguishing a race. Its influence is the more disastrous because differences of religion again divide the princely houses into sub-castes, and still further narrow their choice. If this rule be maintained, I doubt whether any one family now royal will exist, except in a few effete and degenerate scions, at the end of two centuries.”

“Surely that practice has been very long in vogue in Germany without producing such fatal effects.”

“Ay; because until 1815, and perhaps even later, Germany had such a vast number of royal or quasi-royal families that the limitation was not seriously felt. But, observe its influence in England. Compare the princes who have succeeded Anne with those who went before, and see how the principle works. Look at the Georges and their children; it is impossible to overlook the presence of one of the surest marks of close-breeding in human races—a *twist* of the physical, mental, or moral nature showing itself in various ways and in different degrees, but appearing in every successive generation. If a far-sighted Republican had sought to devise a measure which should render Legitimism first ridiculous and then impossible, and pave the way for the utter downfall of hereditary royalty, he could have hit on

none so efficacious as this system of royal caste-marriages."

"And what will be the substitute—Cæsarism or Republicanism?"

"I don't pretend to guess; either would, I think, be a terrible misfortune to mankind. Cæsarism implies periodical revolutions; for your personal ruler must be a man of high ability; and if—as must be expected to happen in the course of three or four generations at furthest—his sceptre falls into the hands of one weak or silly or incompetent successor, it must almost of necessity be wrested from him, at the probable price either of civil war or anarchy. As to Republicanism—there is no necessary objection to a Republic as such; especially if you contrive to dispense with a periodical election of the chief of the Executive. But Republicanism nowadays means democracy; and I greatly doubt whether democracy and civilisation can permanently co-exist."

"I did not know that you accounted us Southerners an uncivilised people," said Mrs. Cleveland, smiling.

"You! American democracy is a thing of yesterday; younger even than the American Union. We have yet to see how long either the one or the other will endure. And, as you know, Ida, your own country was never a democracy except in name. I grant, however, that democracy and civilisation do at present co-exist in the Northern States. And I grant that they might co-exist elsewhere under the same conditions. If you can have a people of whom a majority are or expect to be men of property, and of whom a

very large proportion cultivate their own land; and if at the same time you can so adjust the increase of population and of wealth that no man need feel pinched at present or anxious for the future, then a democratic government may be conservative. But such conditions can only exist in a new country, where there is as yet more unoccupied land than can be required for some generations. Even in America, democracy does not work well where the conditions of the problem resemble those of Europe. High as wages are in New York, comfortable as the working classes might be if they chose, close as they are to districts where ordinary industry will in a few years achieve a competence, the existence of a minority of rich proprietors and a majority of proletaires—well paid as they are—is fatal to the character of democratic government. The majority lay on the taxes and the minority pay them; that one fact notoriously in New York, and I believe in other great American cities, suffices to render a democracy corrupt and extravagant. It is an essential condition of good government that the ruling class should suffer and not gain by an increase of taxation. It is a condition of the permanent security of property that its owners should have power, in the last resort, to defend themselves and coerce the government. In New York—and wherever democratic government is really established in a densely-peopled, highly-organised society—both these conditions are wanting. The rich are too few to control the government; the many are too poor to feel taxation. The latter gain by a lavish outlay, they do not immediately and consciously lose by jobbery and peculation; and therefore they are inclined

to lavishness and tolerant of plunder. Presently they will go a step further, and insist on profiting directly by taxation; and when once they have reached that point, I do not see how anything short of an aristocratic revolution, or interference from without—for example, in New York, the interposition of the yet undemoralised State or Federal power—can save the community from downright pillage, rapid pauperisation, and a return to barbarism. We see in Paris that the poor, if they were masters, would rob the rich. We see that the theory of Communism—a theory which presupposes universal pillage—is everywhere gaining ground among artisans. Not only do they wish to obtain a part of the rich man's wealth for themselves, but they wish to deprive him of it. If they cannot be rich, they wish that all should be poor. Envy and covetousness disguise themselves under the names of justice and equality, and conscience is readily silenced by a convenient logic which appeals rather to the passions than to the reason. And so long as the life of the operative is what it is, and what it must be while he spends every spare shilling in drink, it is not strange that he should be jealous and covetous. Hunger and cold are never reasonable or just. I fear, then, that in all countries where there does not exist a body of proprietors numerous enough and strong enough to keep down the envious disaffection of the proletariat, if necessary by the sword—such as the peasantry of France, perhaps, may be, such as the farmers of America certainly are—democratic institutions will put supreme power into the hands of a class essentially hostile to property. With the destruction of property the motives of industry and accumulation are destroyed;

and every invasion of the right of property—as, for example, unequal taxation, interference with the power of settlement, with freedom of bequest, with the right of inheritance—tends to weaken those motives by weakening men's confidence that they and their children will enjoy the fruits of their labour and thrift. Now I think no one who has watched the signs of the times can doubt that there is a growing tendency towards invasions of the rights of property. Restrictions on the power of bequest, on the amount of inheritances, special taxes on land, avowedly intended to prevent accumulation, are advocated by men who enjoy or at least claim the name of philosophers. Schemes of spoliation which thirty years ago would have been treated simply as apologies for theft, which no respectable man would have avowed and no journal would have deigned to discuss, are now matter of familiar mention and equal argument. Already wholesale confiscation of corporate property has been sanctioned by English legislation—by the legislation, that is, of the State where wealth is most powerful, and where the rights of property have been most jealously guarded by law and opinion. Of the chief demagogues of the day some are avowed Communists, and others use language and advocate measures which tend to confiscation, if not to Communism. I can hardly doubt, then, that democracy—which in old countries means the ascendancy of the classes who own no property—will be fraught with danger to wealth; and if to wealth, then to all the industry and thrift of which the hope of wealth is the origin and motive power; and if to these, then to material progress in the first place, and ulti-

mately to the maintenance of the accumulated riches and resources which constitute civilisation."

"You do not agree with Mill, that Communism might contrive to find effectual incentives to industry, and so far from destroying civilisation, might prove its highest form?"

"No. I have great respect for Mill's opinion on abstract questions of logic or science. But where it is a question of human motives—where knowledge of human nature is required to decide what men will do or feel under given circumstances—I would rather trust the judgment of any practical man of the world, however dull and narrow. I could point out passages in his writings on matters of moral fact, if I may so speak—on the way in which men and women actually do think, feel, and act—which can only be accounted for on the supposition that he generalised from his own individual feelings and domestic experience (which must have been of a most exceptional character), and never asked either man or woman, outside his own study, what their experience might be. And thus, finding that he knows nothing of men and less of women as they are, I decline to follow him into speculation as to what they might be. I can believe that Communism would work, as an industrial system, only on condition that human nature should be as completely revolutionised as society."

"Do you think any Communistic revolution is ever likely to happen, Algernon?" inquired his wife. "Do you fancy that Europe will once more relapse into barbarism; that a new Dark Age will come over Christendom, and England and France perish as Egypt

and Assyria perished? Do you believe in Macaulay's New Zealander sketching the ruins of St. Paul's from a broken arch of London Bridge?"

"Not quite as I fancy Macaulay meant it. With our faculties of communication, I cannot suppose that Europe could relapse into barbarism while America and Australasia continued to grow and prosper. If civilisation is to undergo another catastrophe, it will probably sink in a general deluge like that which overwhelmed the Roman Empire—not a partial and local eruption like the destruction of the empires of Assyria and the Pharaohs. Whether our present civilisation be destined to proceed uninterruptedly as long as the human race endures, or to perish in some awful cataclysm, or to rot by some form of internal decay, I will not now attempt to conjecture. It may be that we have not adequate grounds as yet for a definite judgment on the subject. But if we are to amuse ourselves with mere speculation, it might be argued that history and analogy suggest on the whole a probability that cyclical alternation, rather than continuous progress, is the law of humanity, as it seems to be of nature—each cycle of civilisation no doubt improving on its predecessor, but each doomed to perish. We know, or think we know, that suns and systems have a beginning and an end. We know—or are learning—that planets undergo a long period of preparation for their inhabitants, and again become uninhabitable, as seems to be the case of the moon; their very rotation periods, according to the latest theories, tending to become identical with their times of revolution round the primary, so that after myriads of ages they will always turn the same face to

the sun, as their moons to them. We know that continents emerge, are inhabited for ages, and submerged again to prepare their surface for a new series of inhabitants. We know that thus far each human civilisation has grown and lived and perished; and that the earliest of which history tells us were probably preceded by others earlier still. Perhaps therefore—as the earth seems to be as yet millions of years from the time when, in the opinion of the latest astronomic school, she must become uninhabitable by the present organic creation—it may be the preferable conjecture that mankind are destined to undergo alternations of relapse and advance, and that Europe may one day be almost as desolate and barbaric as Attila left her, and yet again attain a higher civilisation than the present. If it should be so, there are no outer barbarians so likely to break through the defences of civilisation, sweep away disciplined armies, and lay flourishing cities in ashes, as the enemy within; and recent events have at least shown us that such an enemy exists. I will not venture to forecast the term of our civilisation, but I might venture to predict that if it be doomed to perish within a period to which political anticipation may be safely extended democracy will be its destroyer, and a crusade against property the commencement of the new era of darkness.”

“But,” said I, after a pause, “do you really believe in the possibility of a Communistic revolution? Is it not more likely that as soon as Communism becomes really formidable, it will be crushed? The owners of property will not be reasoned or voted out of their wealth: they know that life without property would not be worth having, and however chary they may be

under ordinary circumstances of their own lives, however averse to take the lives of others, yet if it once became a question of confiscation, I believe that they would fight to the death, and that they would show very little mercy to the intending plunderers. And I conceive that they would always be able to conquer. Look at France. Nowhere is Communism so active: nowhere is it half so heartily abhorred by the middle and upper classes. The fear of it induced them to applaud the harsh measures and pardon the usurpation of Louis Napoleon: they were not only ready to put it down by the strong hand, but to endure a protracted suspension of liberty for the sake of keeping it down. When it came to fighting, as in June 1848 and March 1871, they fought resolutely and victoriously, and the vanquished were crushed with an indiscriminate severity, a prodigality of bloodshed, very unusual in recent history. If Communism cannot gain a footing in France, what hope can it have of triumph elsewhere?"

"You overlook two essential points," replied Cleveland. "In the first place, while it is true that Communism is as yet more prevalent in France than anywhere else, it is there confronted by a conservative interest more powerful than is to be found in most European countries. Half or more than half the population of France consists of propertied families: in England the great majority of the people have nothing of their own except a little household furniture. Therefore, while the proletariat of France is far more revolutionary than our own, it is far weaker: the class which may one day come to believe that it would gain by the abolition of property is there more inclined to

that belief than here; but there it is in a minority, here it has an immense numerical preponderance. And again, the government and the law in France were on the side of property; and thus property had in the first place the vast moral advantage of being legally in the right, and the next the command of the whole physical force of government, army and navy, cannon and munitions."

"And will it not always be so, here and everywhere?"

"Ah, that is the crucial question. My fear is that it will not: that democracy will one day put the power of the State into the hands of the Communists. If so, I fear that property would succumb. There would be fighting, no doubt; but the party of civilisation would be taken at a moral and physical disadvantage. If, on the other hand, the struggle should come prematurely, while the State still enforces the eighth commandment, I have no doubt of the result; and I agree with you that society, once alarmed by the faintest possibility of a Communist victory, would be restrained by no maudlin sentiment, no theoretic lenity, from bruising the serpent's head with all the weight of its heel. My fear is, that the battle may be postponed till too late; that democracy will advance more rapidly than Socialism, and that the propertied classes will not perceive their danger till they have parted with their power. Then, when we have a government controlled by a majority who own no property, who save nothing, who practically pay no taxes, ruling and taxing a minority who are utterly outnumbered at the polls, we have every reason to apprehend a speedy development of Communistic ideas—confiscation it may be first of corporate property, then

of a portion of the rights of landed proprietors; then a limitation of the amount of individual fortunes by graduated legacy and income taxes, and so a gradual seizure of the wealth of the few for the supposed advantage of the many—the democracy being incited to such acts mainly by that strenuous envy of superior luxury and refinement which was, I believe, the chief motive of the earlier massacres of the French Revolution, and which, disguised under the name of justice, prompts the demand for ‘equality’ among the Revolutionists of to-day.”

“But may we not hope that before the period of danger comes the majority may be wiser; that they will be educated enough to understand that robbery cannot really profit them, and rich enough to wish to preserve the institutions under which they may grow richer?”

“I doubt if education will much mend the matter. We find a good many educated men moved by envy or enthusiasm to follies quite as great as those of the labouring Socialist. Beesly and Congreve are not a whit wiser than Odger and Lucraft. Younger sons of peers, who owe to the institution of primogeniture the fact that they have an income and a position in the world, are moved by envy of their elder brother to denounce the law but for which they and he alike would have been reduced to poverty and insignificance by the subdivision in successive generations of the family estate. How should we expect a labourer’s child, who leaves school at twelve, or even as it may be some day at sixteen, to detect the fallacies of a Proudhon, or to be exempt from the passions which

are found to beguile fellows of colleges and members of Parliament? Why should he discern his own interests more clearly than they do? And as to wealth—if indeed we could hope that the workmen of England would in another generation be generally the owners of their own cottages, or of a hundred or two in the savings' bank, we might dismiss all fear of Communism. It may be so: God send it! But though their condition is steadily improving, though their incomes are constantly increasing, I can see no signs that they are becoming a thrifty and saving class; and it is saving, not earning—accumulated property, however small, not a precarious income, however considerable—that hardens men's minds against the seductions of Communism. It is one of the special dangers of the age that you cannot create, or even keep up, a class of small landowners. You have them in France, because there the peasant clings to the land, he and his forefathers have cultivated for ages, and will not sell it for a capital that would give him a far larger income. But in any country where employment for capital and labour is ample and various, and where that which foreign writers call "earth-hunger" does not prevail, no poor man can afford to be a landowner. He can obtain an income of £100 a year from the price of land that only yields him £50. Of course he sells; and of course land accumulates in a few hands. The thing is inevitable: no one is to blame for it, and no laws can well alter it; but it constitutes a serious element of social insecurity. And I must say that I regard such institutions as those of Rochdale, and all others that tend to make our artisans possessors of fixed property, whether in the shape of

cottages, gardens, or invested funds of any kind, not only not—as their founders sometimes seem to consider them—as efforts in a Communistic direction, but as among the most effective antidotes to and barriers against Communism that the existing circumstances of English society have produced.”

CHAPTER III.

ÆONOLATRY.

LATE that afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Dalway arrived. He was a Manchester man who had made a considerable reputation, and still more considerable fortune, by some very clever mechanical inventions; and now, at the age of forty, found himself able to devolve the hardest part of his business on junior partners, contenting himself with a general supervision and control. Conscious of the deficiencies of his early education, he had done his best to repair them by diligent study, and was now what most men of business would call a well-informed man, though far from being or desiring to be thought a scholar. He had taken an active if not very prominent part in several political contests, and was understood to aspire to a seat in Parliament. Cleveland had made his acquaintance when the one was a rising journalist and the other a struggling inventor; and though their views were as opposite as those of two men well could be and their tastes by no means congenial, they entertained a strong mutual esteem and regard, and were, if not intimate friends, something more than acquaintances. After dinner, and while the sun was setting, our coffee was brought to us in a pretty arbour, overgrown with roses, that faced the

west; wherein we were permitted to enjoy at once the society of the ladies and the solace of tobacco.

So sitting, with the glow of a splendid summer sunset before us, and the soothing influence of our long cherry-wood pipes rendering us reflective rather than talkative, it was some time before anything like sustained conversation arose. I had fallen almost into a reverie, when a remark of Dalway's on the marvels of railway speed awoke the spirit of controversy.

"I suppose," he said, "that a subject of George II. would have found himself less at a loss, less strange to the world about him, if carried back into the reign of Henry II., than we should do if we could suddenly return to the condition and ideas of 1770. In these one hundred years steam has done more for progress and civilisation than all other agencies had achieved in a thousand years preceding. Among the many things I have to be thankful for, the greatest blessing of all is that I should find myself in the prime of life in this latter half of the nineteenth century, amid the wealth and enlightenment and resources of modern England."

"It must be granted," said Cleveland a moment afterwards, taking his pipe from his mouth, "that unless when some peculiar convulsion or exceptional calamity has befallen it, each generation, in any given cycle of human progress, must be supposed to be better off than its predecessor—at least so far as the propertied classes are concerned. Otherwise, with this proviso, I must say that of all idolatries, all worship of theories or ideals, men or periods, this æonolatry—this adoration of "the nineteenth century"—is that with which I have least sympathy, and which seems to me

the least defensible by sound reasoning upon a just appreciation of facts."

"Surely we have reason to rejoice in, and right to be proud of, the marvellous achievements of our age: the many signal discoveries in every branch of service: the inventions which have made the powers of nature the instruments of man—as the railways and telegraphs, steam-boats and factories, and all the applications of steam: the vast increase of wealth: the comforts and luxuries placed within reach of the majority, if not of all? Fifty years ago, men could travel no faster, or but little faster, than Roman Cæsars or Plantagenet princes did five or fifteen centuries before; and now we pass from London to Cumberland between breakfast and dinner. We have made the lightning—literally—our messenger, and have made it carry an instantaneous signal across the Atlantic. If Caxton had been told in 1480 what the *Times* would be in 1790, it would have seemed to him a brilliant but not an incredible result to be accomplished by his invention in the course of three or four centuries. But if the founder of the *Times* had been told in 1790 that in eighty years the citizens of Bristol and Manchester would read in his journal, by twelve o'clock on Tuesday morning, the speeches delivered by the President of the United States at Washington, and by the Viceroy of India at Calcutta, after sunset on Monday, he would have pronounced such a feat simply impossible. We have gained more since 1790, than 1790 had gained since the Conquest. Is it nothing that our poorest artisans are as well clad and probably as well fed as farmers were before the Revolution? Is it nothing that our popula-

tion, which had not doubled between 1650 and 1800, had more than doubled between 1800 and 1860, and yet is now in every respect richer and better provided than at either of the former dates? Is it nothing that our national income has doubled since Sir R. Peel imposed the Income-tax one-third of a century ago? Can you be serious in doubting that in no previous century had the condition of the foremost peoples of the world so much improved as in any one of the last four or five decades; or that an age of such rapid improvement is that in which it is best to live?"

"Of course," replied Cleveland; "I don't question that the mechanical inventions and scientific discoveries of the century have been great and manifold—probably beyond all former precedent—though I might take leave to doubt whether the discovery of the steam-engine was anything like so grand a step in the course of human advancement as that of iron, or even whether it can fairly be ranked with the invention of printing. Is the telegraph as great a discovery as gunpowder? Is London a pleasanter or more convenient habitation than imperial Rome? Are railways greater achievements than Roman aqueducts and roads? Our grandest public buildings would have seemed contemptible 3000 or 4000 years ago in the Egypt of the Pharaohs. The princes of Babylon would not have boasted of the Thames Embankment; Semiramis or Rameses II. would have impaled our Board of Works '*pour encourager les autres.*' The one serious scheme of modern English engineers at which Assyria would not have laughed is the impudent if not criminal 'atrociousness' by which your Manchester friends propose to vulgarise

from end to end the splendid valley of the Rother, in order that their fellow-citizens may enjoy opportunities of washing themselves and drinking pure water somewhat cheaper than those of which for the last quarter of a century they have made so little use. But passing over these questions, and admitting the supremacy of the age in inventive skill and mechanic science, are we really much the better, wiser, or happier for that? is life nowadays more enjoyable than it was in any previous period of peace and prosperity? I doubt it."

"Look what machinery has done in the single matter of superseding human labour, especially labour of the hardest and least profitable kind—mere mechanical drudgery: you will hardly dispute that the wholesale introduction and rapid development of machinery have been a blessing to the world."

"Strange as it may seem to you, that is one of the points on which I am most doubtful. Has machinery made men's work less or more mechanical? It operates no doubt in both ways. But when I consider that most iron machines require a human machine to tend them—to 'feed' them with fuel or material, to 'piece' broken ends, and so forth—when I reflect on the tendency to an infinite subdivision of functions, greatly encouraged by machinery, which brings us to this, that it takes ten men to make a pin, and twenty to make a watch; and that nine in every ten are simply engaged in repeating one and the same operation ten thousand times a day, and can do nothing else; that not one of the pinmakers could make a pin, none of the watchmakers a watch, by himself; that the capacities, occupations, and attention of each are

narrowed to the uttermost, concentrated on a function almost as limited as can be given to a machine, that function generally a mere repetition of one, two, or three simple muscular movements—I must take leave to doubt the intellectual value of machinery. It may elevate the intelligence of the one skilled mechanic who understands and controls it; it only helps to degrade and stupefy the hundred unintelligent human tools who have to co-operate with or wait upon it, instead of working out for themselves a series of difficult operations, in which the mind must be alert and active. I grant the enormous gain of physical force; the vast economy of cost; but I believe that machinery creates more drudgery—and more abject, though less laborious, drudgery—than it relieves.”

Dalway stared for a moment, and seemed about to make a hasty reply. He paused, however, and after two or three energetic puffs said, “I am not quite sure that I follow your meaning.”

“I admit that machinery greatly diminishes the demand made on the physical powers of man; that it substitutes an easy and sedentary drudgery for one requiring severe muscular effort. For example, the old printing-press taxed the muscles of a strong man to put it in motion; the steam-press merely requires that a boy should stand by to move the papers one after another within its grasp. Each occupation was one of drudgery; but the first required the full strength of a man, the second is an easy task for a woman or a child. Still what is done away is not drudgery but muscular labour. And also, I conceive that machinery, and the system of large factories and minute classification of labour

which it has introduced, has greatly diminished the call upon the intelligence and the senses of the workman. In the olden days, the same person would spin the yarn and weave it, going through all the operations from the first carding of the wool to its final conversion into cloth. Now those operations are divided among a dozen machines, to each of which a human attendant is attached; and that attendant knows nothing of any other part of the process except his own, and very probably knows that in a merely empirical, and performs it in a merely mechanical, fashion. Machinery, in short, has superseded human quickness, intelligence, and resource, even more than human muscle; has dispensed with versatility, and confined what are called skilled labourers in the majority of cases to some single mechanical function unceasingly repeated, as that of the boy who spends his whole time in spreading sheets of paper under the rollers of a printing-machine with a single motion of his two hands, or to a fractional manufacture like that of a pin-head; and it has thus tended to render labour less intelligent, less a matter of true skill and 'cunning,' and more a matter of that lowest kind of manual dexterity which is acquired simply by the incessant repetition of a single muscular movement; and though production be indefinitely increased, the character of the producers is lowered rather than elevated."

"Yet you will hardly deny, I suppose, that the manufacturing artisans are, as a body, more intelligent, more intellectual, possessed of quicker and more active as well as more cultivated minds, than the agricultural labourers, who are placed under conditions more favour-

able to versatility, and making a greater call on the brains and senses of the workman, according to your own reasoning. How do you account for this?"

"The mere agricultural labourer is almost as much a machine as the spinner or carder. The thinking required in agriculture is done by the farmer. When you come to agriculturists who are really thrown on their own resources, and obliged to put brain as well as muscle into their work—as gardeners—you come upon a very intelligent class of men. Take those trades again in which skill is required and machinery is comparatively of little worth—the higher classes of workmen in the building carpentering and similar trades—they are among the most active-minded of our operatives. Such men are the really intelligent workmen; the men who show, when transferred to the freedom and taxed with the manifold exigencies of a colonial life, what energy and capacity they are able to apply to their manual labour. A similar class of men in our factories—those known as mechanics—are subject to somewhat similar conditions; their work, also, makes a call on the mind and cultivates its faculties. Great part of the apparent superiority of the artisan is fallacious—represents not weight of judgment, but practical quickness of perception and expression. Though, through the connection of quickness with self-confidence, a noisy demagogue from Manchester may make himself the leader and tyrant of a Northumbrian village union, I believe that the silent votes of a hundred such villages, after hearing both sides of a simple question, express a more solid wisdom and sounder judgment than the speeches and cheers of the Free Trade Hall on a field night, when

Bright and Chamberlain have harangued five thousand cotton-spinners. But the quick mobile intelligence of the ordinary factory population, in so far as it is not a matter of race—and that it is largely a matter of race the traditional character of the Danish Northumbrians testifies, the keenness of Yorkshire and the independence and vigour of Lancashire having been proverbial before loom or mule was invented—is due to the conditions of their life, not of their work. It is the intelligence of citizens, of men who love and labour in association, and whose minds—and yet more their tongues—are sharpened by constant social intercourse. It displays itself accordingly in political and social rather than in industrial directions, and rather in general and associated action than in individual achievement. Indeed, the factory population are men of theory rather than of action; active democrats, easily swayed by oratory, moved by collective impulses, given to speculative dreams and abstract principles in politics, rather than to practical wisdom and individual efficiency; capable of effecting a revolution and establishing a republic, hardly of founding a colony or governing an empire.”

“I cannot but think,” answered Dalway, “that if you had seen more of them you would do them more justice. Remember that the greater part of the wonderful machinery of the cotton manufacture has been invented by men engaged therein. Look at the Rochdale Pioneers, who in less than fifteen years created a series of institutions any one of which would have been sufficient to demonstrate their practical judgment and business efficiency. The men who founded the Co-

operative Store with a capital of thirty pounds, and conducted it without a single disaster till it had accumulated a capital of thirty thousand, and carried on the largest retail business in the country; who made it at once a shop and a savings' bank, who set up a corn-mill and a cotton factory out of the savings of the operatives of a single town;—these must be men of extraordinary vigour and energy, as well as of tact and wisdom. Their theories would have wrecked them; it was their practical prudence and skill that led them to success in theory's despite."

"Which proves," said Cleveland, "that adverse conditions cannot suppress the essentially practical genius native to the Anglo-Danish Yorkshireman, any more than a cherished theory can blind him to palpable facts and obvious conclusions; *not* that the conditions were favourable."

A pause followed, and we smoked and ruminated in silence.

"What have you to say to the railway system?" at last said Dalway. "Is it nothing that we can now reach Constantinople in less time than it took our grandfathers to reach Paris? that for all practical purposes Edinburgh is nearer London now than Oxford was in 1800? that the coals of Northumberland, the calicoes of Manchester, the woollens of Leeds, the cutlery of Birmingham and Sheffield, are all within a few hours of each other and of the great commercial ports? Is it nothing that travel is now so rapid and so easy that any man of business or of letters who can take a month's holiday in the year, may hope to visit every part of Europe before he is too old to enjoy his

visit; that every nation may become known to every other; and that a man of leisure may now traverse both hemispheres as easily and cheaply as he formerly made the grand tour; above all, that the fruits of China and of Cuba, of Russia and of Illinois, are as available to the London market as the harvests of Lothian and the dairy produce of Cheshire; that our people are no longer dependent on their own soil and on the seasons of England, but have the world for a harvest-field?"

"It would be childish to say that all this is nothing. We are more likely to err on the other side, by thinking it more than it is. Let us try to see what it really amounts to. Suppose it were possible to diminish the globe to a twentieth part of its actual size, without diminishing its produce. Should we count that a gigantic gain? Yet that is all, at the most, that railways and steamships can do. You can get to Edinburgh as easily as your grandfather could get to Oxford. What do you gain, if the consequence is that you go to Edinburgh twice as often as he went to Oxford, and spend twice as much time in travelling; not because you have more pleasure in Edinburgh than he in Oxford, but because the new facilities of travelling have so organised business, so altered our industrial and social system, that Edinburgh and London have become part of one business district? Again, my grandfather made the grand tour of Europe in two years, and was proud of it; I have spent four years in travels which included China and India. But have I seen as much of those countries as he saw of France, Germany, Spain, and Italy? Have I learnt as much as he did? One of the consequences of these new means of travel is that

travel is made too easy to be useful. Everything along the great routes is adapted to the traveller's convenience; he has no need to apply to the people of the country for anything; no occasion to make their acquaintance or to speak their tongue. Unless he goes out of his way to seek them, he learns little or nothing of their character, their ideas, their temper or their institutions. Everything in his route—railways, ships, inns—are cosmopolitan, are arranged to spare him the trouble and take from him the lessons of genuine travelling; and he may run round the world without learning as much of any one country as his brother who stays at home may learn of all by a judicious use of books and of society."

"I suppose," returned Dalway, "that there is a good deal of truth in what you say. Still, I must be allowed to think that you exaggerate that truth. No doubt it is possible for men to travel to very little purpose; and though that must always have been the case, I can believe that the majority of travellers now-a-days learn less than in former times of the countries they visit. But you will hardly deny that nations are better acquainted with each other than they were in the eighteenth century; and that such acquaintance has done away with a great deal of stupid and brutal prejudice among the untravelled classes, and has helped to widen the views and enlighten the minds of those who do travel. And I observe that you have not touched the question of commerce—the services of railways and steamboats in opening new markets to producers and new supplies to consumers, in reducing to mere fluctuation of prices within narrow limits those

consequences of a cold summer or a bad harvest which a century ago involved national distress or local famines, so that few but corn producers or corn importers now watch anxiously the indications of the market; and in bringing the luxuries of the tropics within reach of the poorest classes of Europe."

"I cannot deny," Cleveland answered, "that in widening the area from which we draw our food supplies, modern facilities of communication have conferred a great boon upon countries like our own, of dense population and high cultivation, wherein a comparatively small deficiency in the harvest might cause grave suffering. That they do not *prevent* famines, the example of Ireland shows; that they do constantly tend to make a famine more improbable, and to render an ordinary scarcity a very trivial misfortune to the consumer, is evident. Whether or not there are grave drawbacks to this gain—great dangers incident to our dependence on food supplies which might conceivably be cut off by war—I will not now consider. As to the advantage of bringing such tropical luxuries as tea and coffee within reach of the many, that question is part of a much wider one—the question, namely, whether society gains by the creation of new wants coupled with the means of satisfying them. The subjects of Elizabeth suffered nothing from the absence of tea and coffee; we could not do without them. I think it would be difficult to show that we are any the better off for having added new articles to our list of necessities. Comfort is a matter of sensations, not of commodities; and the Elizabethan felt as comfortable with his ale and barley-bread as the subject of Victoria with

his tea and wheaten loaf. And generally, it is only insomuch as it has given greater comfort or surer maintenance to each individual that commerce has benefited mankind. So far as it has merely enabled thrice as many people to exist in the same condition as before—and two-thirds, at least, of the resources it has given us have been thus used up—I don't know that we are gainers by it."

"The mere power of multiplication implies the removal of a restraint which in itself greatly affects human happiness."

"True; but that only applies to the generations which do multiply. We may be the happier because—if it should be so—England is able to support a population doubling itself between 1875 and 1900; we are none the better because the population was able to double itself between 1810 and 1860."

"If you are so hard on railways and steamers," said Mrs. Dalway, smiling, "I suppose you are yet more contemptuous of the telegraph and its developments?"

"Telegraphy is a wonderful result of scientific research and inventive ingenuity. But I don't see that it contributes, on the whole, to the ease or comfort of mankind. It alters the conditions of business; it gives us news with infinite rapidity; but, after all, what do we really gain by knowing on the 1st of December instead of the 10th what was the price of flour at Chicago, or who was elected President of the United States, or what was the issue of a battle? It is only that we get all our news earlier; in short, that for all practical purposes events in America happen (to us) ten days earlier than they used to do. Against this

must be set the grave mischief that we have to wait ten days for detailed news; that we are liable to be deceived by incorrect or abbreviated messages; and that business men have now no period of repose; every day is post-day, and 'business hours' or their cares and liabilities last from midnight to midnight."

"I admit to the full," observed Dalway, "the inconvenience of summaries. But surely that is an evil essentially temporary and incidental to the gradual development of all great inventions. Ere long we shall doubtless be able to converse with New York or Peking as fluently as in this arbour, and newspaper telegrams will be limited in length only by other demands on editorial space."

"There is," Cleveland continued, "another aspect of the commercial and manufacturing progress of the age, which ought not to be passed over as it commonly is in considering the influence of that progress on national and human well-being: I mean the growth of cities. About one-half of the population of England are now inhabitants of towns; and the tendency to aggregation is still on the increase. Not only is the proportion of the civic to the total population rising, but the greatest increase occurs in the greatest towns. The monstrous overgrowth of London is a matter of boast to the optimist school of statisticians; to me it seems matter for grave anxiety. Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Bristol, Newcastle, Bradford, are also spreading rapidly over the suburban districts in their neighbourhood, in a way of which the formal figures of the Census give a very imperfect idea. For you must add to the nominal population of Liverpool that of Birkenhead and all

the suburbs on both sides the Mersey. Manchester and Salford, forming a single town of which the political division is purely artificial, are but the nucleus of an enormous urban district, which reaches almost to Stockport in one direction and will soon approach Bolton in another. Between Liverpool and Manchester the alkali manufacture is building up another straggling city, of which St. Helen's is the nucleus. Taking in the whole area which virtually belongs to these cities, which for purposes of trade and commercial intercourse is really part of them, they extend from the mouth of the Mersey to Stockport and Staleybridge, and their population is almost as large as that of London. I verily believe that before the end of this century there will be an almost continuous street along the whole line of the Manchester and Liverpool railroad, a city reaching for ten miles east south and north of the Manchester Exchange, and including Stockport and Bolton. A city of the same kind is growing fast in the Potteries; a similar process is going on for miles around Birmingham. Now I cannot but regard this as a great social and political danger. Putting aside, as a matter on which men's judgment will be governed by party considerations, my own belief that the lower classes of these vast aggregations are being brutalised by the hideous ugliness around them far faster than you can civilise them by schools, that they are dangerously revolutionary in their feelings and opinions, and that their power and influence are exerted almost entirely for evil, no one can deny that these gigantic cities are very difficult to govern. The interdependence of each fraction of the mass requires that they should be

ruled as units; and yet the difficulty of so ruling them, the overwhelming magnitude of the task that would fall upon a municipal parliament and ministry invested with full local authority over London, or the Manchester district, or the Liverpool cluster of towns, has hitherto deterred statesmen from attempting to unite the local powers as the towns have physically united themselves. To provide for the police, the sanitary regulation, the communications, the lighting, the water supply of from one to three millions of human beings covering an area of fifty or one hundred square miles, is a duty too onerous for any such local government as we have hitherto been able to create; and yet to divide the area among half-a-dozen separate authorities is to insure inefficiency, waste, and failure. But even if this first critical difficulty were surmounted, the unwieldy size of such civic masses is in itself fatal to their welfare. They are disorganised from very aggregation; broken to pieces by their own weight. Such social organisation, such unity of political life, as is needful to social and political well-being, is impossible to them. They are disintegrated. There is no relation between the different classes of society; little intercourse save of a business nature between employers and employed; the rich merchants and manufacturers, the tradesmen and middlemen, the artisans and labourers, severally live apart, each in a district of their own, bound by few or no ties of neighbourhood and kindness. There is nothing to soften the bitterness of feeling produced by the contrast between luxury and want; nothing to soothe the irritation arising out of commercial competitions or industrial contests—out of social and political antag-

onism between different classes. The richest and most cultivated class hold aloof from municipal government, and take little personal part in any function which could bring them into friendly contact with the poor; and thus they render no service to their fellow-citizens and establish no claim on their confidence or goodwill. The shopkeepers and publicans have the local authority in their hands; and not enjoying the education nor possessing the manners that fit men to rule over others, and being like all democratic rulers too often prone to jobbery, they are apt to make both themselves and the authority they administer unpopular, distrusted, and contemptible. And the labourers, left to themselves, grudge the wealth which renders them no service, and revolt against the power which is not visibly justified by results, dignified by personal superiority, or popularised by aristocratic bearing. Such a community is clearly in great danger. Its order rests on no natural basis of habit, affection, or even general respect; it can be securely governed only while its disorderly elements are held in check by external force; and in proportion as such communities form a larger and larger part of the nation, the disorderly elements are strengthened and the external force is diminished. Again, city life has in itself a tendency to embitter social antagonisms and class discontents. The life of a peasant however poor has in it much that is enjoyable; he is not dependent for all that makes it tolerable upon his means of purchasing gratification of the senses; he breathes the pure air, he enjoys the free sunshine and fair sights of nature; he lives among fields and flowers; lastly, he has a home of his own, be it ever so humble. The city

artisan has too often only a lodging; it is in that lodging that he must find whatever of pleasure his life can afford, unless he seek it at the public-house; he breathes a confined atmosphere, and sees night and morning only the ugly bricks and tiles of his neighbours' dwellings. He is at once intellectually quickened and morally barbarised; more civilised in brain, less civilised in heart, than the agricultural labourer. Only in a city could the frantic savagery of the French Revolution, the wanton blood-lust and envious greed of the late Communists, have been engendered; only citizens would have slaughtered in cold blood the women and children of a nobility solely because they were refined, beautiful, and well born; or would have deliberately murdered men of saintly life and kindly repute, whose only crime was that they belonged to the wealthy and educated classes. The Jacqueries were less atrocious; and the Jacqueries were provoked by intolerable suffering and cruel wrongs. The Septembrists, the Communists, had no such apology. It is said indeed that the French peasantry had suffered much injustice from their lords before the first Revolution. But it was not by the peasantry that the massacres were perpetrated, but by the civic rabble to whom the aristocrats had done no wrong, and who hated them then as now only for being rich and refined. We may not have in England a class of Septembrists or Internationalists—a Robespierre or a Rigault. But the same tendency to reckless anarchy, to wanton savagery, is everywhere visible in the city populace, everywhere produced by the same conditions; and it alarms me to see the city populace becoming daily a more numerous and

more powerful element both in the nation and in the political constituency.”

“I will grant,” answered Dalway, “that there are grave drawbacks and disadvantages in the rapid growth of great cities. I admit that our great cities are badly governed. In fact, the local government of England is the scandal of our constitution, the disgrace of our legislation. If a tithe of the time and energy which Parliament has spent in party fights and party measures, in discussions whose main object has been to secure an unfair political preponderance to a faction, or turn out one set of noblemen and gentlemen and put another set of noblemen and gentlemen in office, had been devoted to the reformation of our municipal system, two-thirds of your remarks would have been inapplicable. It may be granted that an elective and unpaid authority will never be quite so prompt and efficient as that of a bureaucracy. But the principles which have been found adequate to the government of an empire would not fail in providing for the government of a city. Our misfortune is that the growth of our cities has so utterly outstripped that of the institutions on which their regulation depends; that we are trying to rule a population of the nineteenth century with a government of the sixteenth. Yet even so the health of London in 1878 is, as Lord Macaulay showed, better than was the health of Devonshire in 1678. The condition of our cities improves, in despite of their unsystematic rapidity of growth. And as to your observations on the separation of classes, I cannot put upon the facts the same colour that you do. The time has gone by when the poor were the dependents or

clients of the rich, and when therefore the latter felt themselves under obligation to look after and care for those with whom they were in much the same kind of relation as at this day with their own households. The workman is now on equal terms with his master; can leave him and does leave him when he pleases; has no relation with him beyond that of paid service, no obligation to him save that of rendering a certain quantity of work for stipulated wages, no claim on him for anything more than the wages agreed upon. The two are independent parties to a simple bargain: the artisan sells labour, the capitalist buys it; and the purchase of labour no more entails on the buyer any further duties towards the seller than does the purchase of sugar or silk. The notion that the employer ought to care for the employed when they leave the factory—that he has more to do with them than with his grocer or his baker, or more than any other rich man on whom they may have on occasion that general claim which every suffering man has on the fellow-man who has power to help him—is a relic of bygone times, inconsistent with the actual relations of modern society: and to foster such notions only tends to impair the self-reliance which is the basis of existing order, and the sole hope of the working-class of the future. You cannot go back to the feudal system of interdependence, of permanent authority and responsibility on one side, and permanent service and obedience on the other: and as the latter obligation has been repudiated by the artisan, so is the employer released from the former.”

“Of course the relation is not what it was,” replied

Cleveland; "and in too many cases it is what you describe it to be—a mere matter of bargain and sale. But I contend that this is an unwholesome condition; that the absence of all permanent ties between man and man is an essential evil, and a grave social peril. It is well that the law no longer binds the workman to his master; but that is no reason why they should become as strangers. The legal bond was an evil precisely because it superseded the necessity of other ties; an evil when those ties ceased to be congenial, when, after the old affection had died out, it bound the labourer to an employer who did not care for him. But that is no reason why the labourer should not be bound by custom and by mutual kindness to an employer who does care for him. Legal authority is at an end; personal influence should fill its place. And as to the performance of public functions, social or political, which is now so grievously neglected by the upper classes, I contend that it is the condition of the rank and consideration they enjoy. I contend that it is the obligation imposed by wealth and education. The only justification for the existence of any class of men is public utility; the duty of every citizen is to serve the State where he best can; the duty of every Englishman is to do his best for England. Now men of wealth and culture are peculiarly fitted to govern; the ablest of them in the high offices of the State or in the national Legislature, the less able or less ambitious in the administration of their several localities. They enjoy influence inseparable from their position, which enables and obliges them to be leaders in public business. They enjoy respect and deference, which

they are bound to merit by public service. If they seclude themselves from public duties, of what use are they to the world, or to their country? by what right do they enjoy consideration, deference, social privileges, beyond those of their neighbours? In a word, as Mr. Disraeli says, 'if they are not to be the leaders of the people, why should there be gentlemen?' You cannot but have observed the willingness of Englishmen to be led by their social superiors; the readiness with which on every occasion of difficulty they will accept the guidance of the first gentleman who appears on the scene; their helplessness and indecision in the absence of any such leader. Facts like these indicate clearly enough that no laws are needed to give power to the natural aristocracy of each community—the country gentleman of a rural district, the great manufacturers of a factory town, the merchant princes of Liverpool or London. Power they have, and it is their duty to use it. In neglecting it, they throw it into the hands of their enemies; they provoke the people to ask for what purpose they exist; they rest the tenure of their wealth, they throw the whole burden of resistance to the envy and greed it naturally excites, upon a single principle—the interest of the State, and of the working-classes especially, in encouraging the accumulation of capital. And assuredly no principle so purely logical, appealing so little to the senses the imagination and the hearts of the many, will suffice to restrain their passions in times of excitement. It is because our territorial aristocracy are as a rule the chiefs, governors, and guardians of their respective communities that their wealth and rank are so generally respected and so

little grudging—at least by those among whom they live. It is because the manufacturing aristocracy so generally fail in these duties that their wealth is assailed by such frantic clamours against the tyranny of capital. If the merchant prince is less obnoxious, it is because his wealth is not so obvious—is nowhere forced upon the eyes of the many, and comes into no contact with them. Depend upon it, no class can permanently retain an enviable position in modern society which does not justify its privileges by palpable public service: and property can only be secure in its rights while it has visible, obvious, necessary duties, acknowledged and performed to the contentment of those who have nothing.”

“I cannot see,” rejoined Dalway, “that a man is bound to earn his wealth twice over. That which I, for instance, have acquired is the price of services rendered to the public, for which the public has paid their market value. If I chose to spend it all as I received it, I had a clear right to do so. If I choose to save it and bequeath it to my children, in what way does the fact that I did save it instead of spending it give the public any further claim on me and mine? They have already had full value for £100,000, which I have a right to squander if I think fit. If I do squander it, the public claim on me and mine ceases. — If I save it, and thereby increase by £100,000 the permanent capital of the country, and add say one-half thereof to the wages fund yearly distributed among the labourers and to the annual produce of the community, how can you contend that the fact of my rendering that service to England gives England a right to the services of my

children, which she would not have had if I had not conferred that benefit upon her?"

"Observe, that if you had not bequeathed that £100,000 to your children, they must have earned their living—that is, must have done public service, as productive labourers or otherwise, for hire or reward. If you exempt them from that necessity, you do not thereby deprive the State of that right to their services which it has to the services of all its citizens; nor can you absolve a man merely by leaving him wealth from the universal, natural duty of making himself useful according to his powers and opportunities. By increasing those powers and opportunities, you have increased their obligations. 'Unto whom much is given, of them shall much be required,' is a maxim of natural as well as of Christian ethics. The right you have earned for your children is not the right of being idle, but the right of choosing the higher kinds of service, which are necessarily or for convenience' sake unremunerated. They can afford to work as men of science, men of letters, thinkers or statesmen, instead of labouring as mere bread-winners. But you cannot exempt them from the duty of serving their country and their kind; nor should you desire to do so."

"I think," said Mrs. Dalway, "that you have just brought to light one of the peculiar virtues of the nineteenth century; the general recognition of public, social, and human duties. It is a novelty of this age that we recognise so clearly the claims of our less fortunate fellow-creatures and the duties of the more fortunate; the doctrine that no man has a right to live for himself, and that it is a sacred duty of those who

have means and leisure, to employ both in relieving the misery and improving the condition of their poor neighbours."

"I know," returned Cleveland, "that that is one of the favourite topics of optimists and æonolaters. But I deny its truth entirely. We have learnt to talk about these claims and duties more than our forefathers did; we have learnt, moreover, a horror of hardship and pain which has its good side, inasmuch as it restrains us from inflicting pain in cruelty, wantonness, and carelessness, or in excessive severity, and stimulates us to go out of our way to relieve it; but which seems likely to degenerate into a maudlin sentimentality that hates sorrow more than sin, shrinks from inflicting adequate punishment on the worst criminals, and thereby causes ten times more pain to those who do not deserve it, and risks demoralising a whole population in order to save the idle and thriftless from hunger and cold. We are recklessly tender in interfering with the just operation of the laws of God and man, and thereby thwarting the curative processes of nature and of society,—just as if a surgeon were to drive in an eruption because it was ugly, or repress a fit of the gout at the peril of the patient's life. We cannot bear to hang a murderer, and we consequently render the punishment of murder so uncertain as to be scarcely deterrent, and probably sacrifice ten lives of innocent persons for every scoundrel saved from the gallows. We cannot bear that a fellow who won't work should starve, and we have thus created a class of able-bodied paupers who deliberately tell the guardians that they will not work, knowing that they must be fed whether they do or not.

Nay, even our severity partakes of the same sickly sentiment. A man beats and half kills the seducer of his wife; and because it is a crime of violence, we pass a heavier sentence on him than on a shoplifter or pickpocket. This low, coarse sentiment, I grant you, belongs to the nineteenth century—*tant pis pour lui*. But though we talk a great deal of public and social duties, I doubt whether that very talk is not a proof of practical neglect. In the old days it was a matter of course that no man lived for himself. An Athenian in the time of Pericles, a Roman of the Punic wars, did not require to be told that every man had a duty to discharge towards the State; it was only when Athens had degenerated into readiness for the Macedonian yoke, when Rome was little better than the domain of the reigning Cæsar, that men began to preach the duties of citizens. The idea just enounced by Dalway, that a rich man has a right to retire into the bosom of his family, and live for himself and them alone, was one that could never occur to the rich Englishman of the Middle Ages. He had a fixed place in the community, with stated duties towards the king his peers and his inferiors, from which he could not withdraw. If he were a citizen, he had his place in his guild and his obligations to his brethren; he was liable to serve in city offices; he had his foreman, journeymen, apprentices, often his sailors, as the case might be, to whom he stood in definite and permanent relations. His priest continually reminded him that he had duties to the Church and the poor; and how he fulfilled them a thousand hospitals and almshouses bear witness. If he were a landowner, the very nature of his wealth

determined his duties. It bound him to serve the king as soldier and counsellor. It bound him to serve the community as ruler and magistrate. His retainers, his vassals, his tenantry, stood towards him in close familiar, personal relations, which he could not shake off. The very tenure of his estate reminded him that he could not do as he would with his own; and when under the Tudors, as Froude has reminded us, new-made landlords from the towns endeavoured to deal with their lands simply as wealth-producing instruments, and turned out men to make room for sheep, their conduct outraged the moral sense of the age, was greeted with indignant curses by the people and sharply prohibited by Parliament. In those days there was no need to remind the rich that property had its duties as well as its rights, for the truth was one that they could not forget for a day. They knew it too well to talk about it. *On ne cherche pas à prouver la lumière.* It is because the social bond is dissolved that we need to insist on the moral one; it is because the obligations of rank and wealth are forgotten that they are preached."

"The theory of the feudal system and the guild system," answered Dalway, "may be a romantic one, but history leaves us no doubt that the practice was detestable. The knights and gentlemen were tyrants to their vassals—as is proved by the insurrections of the latter in almost every country—and robbers to the citizens; while the guilds confined the privileges of trade to a limited class, and enabled the merchants to make enormous profits and live in luxury at the expense of

the consumers of their wares, or of those from whom rich consumers extorted their wealth."

"I think you misinterpret history and turn the exception into the rule," said Cleveland. "The powers of feudal chiefs were often abused, no doubt, as power always is abused in rude ages; and in times of anarchy and war the peasantry suffered severely. But the insurrections of which you speak almost always followed on such periods, which in this country at least were altogether exceptional. From the reign of Edward I. it is plain that the yeomanry of England were on the whole heartily attached to their lords; the gentry never bore any resemblance to the robber-chiefs of the Rhine or the Scotch Highlands. Lawless extortion or sheer robbery were always, in feudal England, exceptional outrages, the incidents of civil war or weak administrations, as is proved both by the testimony of foreign annalists and by such sayings as that 'household word,' 'Every Englishman's house is his castle.' That phrase marks a people among whom, in ordinary times, the law was stronger than the sword. And my argument is not that the feudal chiefs did not misuse their power or fail in their duties, but that they acknowledged the one and recognised that the other was a trust; that their wealth was spent not in selfish luxury, but in the maintenance of dependents and the performance of public duties; and that such a form of social order, binding men of all classes in definite relations and giving each a fixed place in the community, rendered society far more united, the State more secure, the nation stronger, than that universal isolation of individuals and separation of classes, that ubiquity of competition—

that apotheosis of selfishness in the principle, 'Every man for himself and God for us all,'—which are the foundations of the social structure of the nineteenth century."

"The Wars of the Roses are a striking illustration of social and national unity," answered Dalway.

"I think they bear out my theory," returned Cleveland. "If there had been any general feeling of discontent and disaffection among the vassals, those wars would have been impossible. It was the steady attachment of the yeomanry and retainers to their chiefs that enabled the latter to bring them to the field in quarrels which chiefly concerned the baronage; and that attachment survived the exile and apparent ruin of many great families. Warwick was able to arm as many men against Edward IV. as he had raised against Henry VI. The weakness of the Yorkist kings lay in the impossibility of giving to new men any of that control over their tenantry which the De Veres and Neviles, the Exeters and Somersets, the Percys and Stanleys, possessed. There were risings of the rural populace against Edward IV., but they seem to have been provoked by these 'new men,' and especially by the Woodvilles; and the personal influence of Warwick was great enough to quiet a rebellion in which half Yorkshire was engaged. We see no signs of disaffection on the part of the people towards their born lords, such as there must have been if these lords had been tyrants rather than protectors; such as was provoked into rebellion by very occasional and often trivial acts of injustice on the part of their successors. The readiness of the people to rise against tyrants shows how little

used they were to tyranny. And the evidence of Froissart shows how local and limited was the suffering caused even by civil war."

"At any rate, the course of those wars shows most unprincipled selfishness on the part of the barons and gentry."

"I doubt it. The first rebellion was provoked by the incapacity of Henry VI. and the misrule that followed, and by the tyranny of Margaret. The conditions of the Middle Ages required a competent king, and the attempt to set aside Henry VI. seems to have been thoroughly in accord with English ideas. What Parliament might do and did in later ages, was then done by the sword. Edward IV. proved almost as bad a king and a much worse man than Henry, and Richard III. was simply hateful; while the policy of their House was directed so violently against the aristocracy as to justify revolt, the only practical form of opposition in those days. Then the heads of both Houses having forfeited the confidence of the country, and neither having a distinctly rightful title, men felt free to pass from side to side as their temper or interest prompted. Civil war always demoralised; but it demoralised the generation which succeeded Richard III. less than that which succeeded Cromwell. The Tudors carried out the policy of the House of York, crushed the remnant of the aristocratic power, and uprooted that of the Church. The modern principles of money-getting were introduced among a new race of landowners, and from that time began popular disaffection and class antipathies. The tyranny of the Tudors was the consequence not of the feudal system but of its destruction.

The Crown and the multitude were the only powers left; and the Crown could do as it pleased except when it directly oppressed and provoked the multitude. If a great baronage had existed in the seventeenth century, the disloyalty of the Lower House would never have driven Charles I. into usurpation, nor would the usurpations of the king have enabled that House to usurp in its turn a power which it was speedily forced to resign into the hands of a military despot. And, in one word, it was the destruction of the feudal system which handed over Europe to the despotism of princes and the frenzy of revolutions, and which gave up England to the dominion of factions."

"By the dominion of factions you mean what we call government by party?"

"Party—especially hereditary and traditional party, such as always characterises an old settled State with strong permanent interests and broad social distinctions—has an almost irresistible tendency to degenerate into faction. Men retain party names, connections, and organisations after the issues in which these originated have been finally settled, and have, in fact, disappeared. Then, instead of parties existing to carry out great objects and enforce great principles, objects are created and principles invented to justify the existence and hold together the organisation of parties which in reality only subserve personal ambitions. And parties which only or chiefly subserve personal ambitions become—I should say, are—mere factions."

"But surely the questions of the last decade are as great, in their way, as many of those which most strongly divided in former times what you will admit

to have been real and sincere parties. Remember the Irish Church, the Irish Land Law, the Education Act, even the Endowed Schools Act; and the late political changes, the Ballot and Household Suffrage. Each of these involved great public interests; and, I should say, questions of principle broad and deep enough to divide parties as clearly and really, if not as fiercely, as the issues of any period since the Revolution."

"I am not sure that any of our parties since the Revolution—except the Jacobites from 1688 to 1750—have ever been much better than factions. During the wars of European independence indeed from 1793 to 1815, the Tories had real principles to which they were passionately attached, and which they thought worth fighting for as well as voting for. But then the Tories were not a party—they were the nation. The cause of Europe against the Terror and Napoleon, of constitutional order against revolution and tyranny, was that of the whole nation, excepting a few fanatics in the lower orders and a few *doctrinaires* and enthusiasts in the upper. For long years the Opposition vanished from Parliament and public life. At no other period can I honestly say that the objects for which parties contended, however important they might be, had really any connection with the principles on which the several parties were nominally founded, and to which their rank and file were often sincerely however ignorantly attached. There was, for instance, no reason why Protection should have been a Tory and not a Whig cry; except that the last remnant of Protection happened to be agricultural, and that the landowners and farmers who from obvious motives desired to retain it

happened to be Tories. Similarly, there was no earthly reason why the Whigs should have made the question of Parliamentary Reform their own. As matter of historic fact, they had profited tenfold more and for a much longer period than the Tories by the abuses of the old system, and were careful to retain in 1832 the most flagrant, or at least the most signal, most critical, and practically the most mischievous, of these abuses—the unfair preponderance of the towns. Macaulay himself remarks that had representation been fairly distributed according either to numbers or to wealth, none of the great Whig victories prior to 1832—not even the Revolution itself—could have been accomplished by parliamentary means. It was then mere accident that made the Tories Protectionists and the Whigs Reformers. Mere accidents of personal feeling have made the Liberals—who, under William III. and Anne and the first two Georges were the war-party—for the last seventy years hostile to all attempts to put the military forces of England on a footing adequate to her traditional repute, or her actual requirements and security as a Great Power. I suspect that interest had more to do than conviction with the adoption of Catholic Emancipation by the Whig leaders. It is notorious that the greatest of Tory chiefs, the younger Pitt, was a better Free-trader, a more loyal and earnest parliamentary Reformer, a wiser and more far-sighted Emancipationist, than any of those recognised party chiefs who eventually carried Catholic Emancipation, the Reform of 1832, and the Free-trade tariffs of Huskisson, Peel, and Gladstone. But the Tory Reform Bill of 1868 was perhaps the most flagrant, signal, and striking example of that

readiness to adapt the political principles of the past to the personal interests of the present which marks the degradation of parties into factions. There were probably not twenty of those Conservatives whose votes carried the third reading who did not hate it in their hearts; as there were yet fewer among its adversaries who were not by their whole career pledged to its principle. The only leader on either side who was after his fashion probably sincere and earnest, was the chief author of that *volte-face* measure, who seems to look on politics of Party and of Parliament as a game; who, while observing its rules, subordinates its issues to the great imperial interests of the monarchy, with a simple, unflinching loyalty that might read to the professors of high principles—Gladstones and Granvilles, Brights and Fawcetts—a lesson they greatly require. He believed, apparently with reason, that the democratic reform of 1868 was a party move likely, in the long run, to requite the disloyalty and reverse the results of the ingenious Whig *bourgeois* Reform of 1832.

“The conversion of the Whigs to the Ballot was almost equally rapid, and its sincerity in turn equally incredible. No one who remembers accurately the circumstances under which the Irish Church agitation commenced, can believe that it would ever have succeeded then and there but for the Oxford election immediately preceding it, which embittered the High Church leader of the Liberals against the Church. While the facts were fresh in men’s memories, few affected in private to doubt that nine in ten of those English Liberals who voted for the Irish Land Bill disapproved heartily the one important and distinctive clause

therein, upon which parties were divided. Compensation for mere ejection was the only part of that bill which the Tories would not willingly have given; and I never heard a Liberal of good political standing and sound economical training defend that clause except either as a party necessity—that is, a factious trick—or as a concession to the power of assassination. The Education Act was the work of one man much more honest than either his colleagues or opponents; and his party have never forgiven him for it, because in educating the people as Christians it seemed likely to make them Churchmen. No Dissenting politician would accept a scheme of education that appeared dangerous to the interests of Dissent, and favourable to the doctrines of the Church as the one form of orthodox Christianity which educated Englishmen are able to assimilate. I believe it again to be a mere accident that the two great parties have not changed leaders. Had not circumstances given to Mr. Disraeli a chance of seizing the command left vacant by Sir Robert Peel, he would probably have been ere this a Radical and by force of intellect captain of the Radicals. Had not *his* prior claims presented an insuperable obstacle, his great rival would probably have assumed long ago, probably in 1859, the leadership of the Tories in the House of Commons under the late Lord Derby. I grant that there are objects now aimed at, principles professed, and questions raised which might divide parties on a line clearly marked by sincere and even passionate convictions; which might afford them a battle-ground quite as firm, a political faith as well worth fighting for, as those of Puritans or Cavaliers;

issues involving the very existence of social order and the security of property. But—and this is the point on which I insist—on every one of these questions, three-fourths of the Liberals are in accord with the Tories, and regard with aversion and terror the views of the Radicals, by whom they are practically led, or rather dragged along; whose purposes they are reluctantly subserving, and whose ultimate success they now prepare and will probably one day assist. How is it possible to call that organization anything but a faction, three-fourths of whose members, on the vital issues of the age, utterly detest the direction in which they are going and the allies with whom they act? Most Liberals, unconsciously or half-consciously, are helping to destroy institutions ten times dearer to them than any one of the minor objects for which they co-operate with the Radicals. They aid the latter in overthrowing and undermining those Conservative forces upon whose strength must, in the last resort, depend the preservation of everything that Tories and moderate Liberals alike regard as worth dying for, and as necessary to make life worth living. What is this but the worst sort of faction?"

CHAPTER IV.

LACHESIS OR ATROPOS!

A PROLONGED pause attested the coolness of our political partisanship, before Cleveland's challenge was answered.

"Surely," said Dalway at last, "there is no party, I might say there is no man whose name carries sensible weight or influence, that would propose to impair in the slightest degree the security of property; or even, at least for the present, to sweep away those inequalities of rank and privilege which you seem to regard as the essence and foundation of social peace and order. No man who should advocate pillage or Communism would find a majority in any audience—even one exclusively composed of tradesunionists; while among educated men such a speaker could not get a hearing. You cannot say that the abolition of primogeniture would be an infringement of the rights of property?"

"Of course not," answered Cleveland; "at least so long as the Legislature confined itself to changing the disposition it now makes of an intestate's property, and did not interfere with the owner's power of bestowing it as he pleases by will. But though this be all that the Radicals yet propose, they would not remain for ten years contented with this. Their object is to prevent the permanent maintenance of great families

and great estates. They think, very perversely, that by abolishing the law of primogeniture they would accomplish this object. Finding out their mistake as they soon would, they would next insist on abolishing that custom which is the foundation of the law; and to do that they must deprive the proprietor of testamentary freedom. Now, I hold that testamentary liberty is of the essence of private as distinct from family property. A man can do as he will with his own down to the last moment of life. A will is only a simpler, a safer, a more convenient way of doing the same thing. Therefore to deprive a man of the power to dispose of his property by will, and to do this effectually, you must in point of fact limit or rather take away his power of disposing of it during his life. Even this first movement, then, which is accepted and avowed by parliamentary leaders, is really an insidious and indirect attack on landed property. But those writers and agitators out of Parliament who exercise more influence now-a-days on the bent of that nascent speculation which ultimately becomes dominant opinion, than do the actual rulers of the day, are going now very much further. Mr. Mill proposed to confiscate all 'unearned increment' in the value of land—that is practically all increased value which could not be shown to be the result of improvements made by the owner. His disciples are beginning to clamour for the abrogation of all property in land. To theorists no doubt such property seems open to objections that do not apply to chattels; but in point of fact land is the least odious form of property, because its ownership at

least in this country carries with it so many duties, which on the whole are well performed. And again, no property recognised by law and custom can be touched without imperilling all. Capital—especially the capital invested in manufactures and mines, and generally all capital employed in supporting and assisting labour—excites, as you well know, an animosity and jealousy among the lower classes which they never spontaneously or heartily feel towards the landowner; and we may be very sure that the spoliation of the territorial gentry would be followed within ten years by the spoliation of the capitalists. Spoliation means the destruction of property, and the destruction of property means the relapse of mankind into barbarism. If universal suffrage should put the physical force of the State into the hands of the ignorant, envious multitude, I can see no security that even English civilization might not be swept away as completely as that of Assyria or of Rome, of the Pyramid-founders of the Nile and the Mound-builders of the Mississippi. The French Revolution, as I have already observed, proved what diabolical malignant senseless barbarism, combining the trained and sustained mental energy born of civilized life and organization with the remorseless cruelty of the savage, may lurk undetected in the lower orders of the most brilliant and cultivated society. The Commune of 1871, with its slaughter of hostages, with its bands of *petroleuses* and its gangs of incendiaries, warned us that the last hundred years have not materially softened the temper or enlightened the minds of these intestine enemies of civilization. All the legislation, all the political movement of the last

thirty years, have steadily tended in one direction, giving to the rabble as the majority the ultimate control of that organized military force of the State which is one of the crowning creations, and on which in the last resort must rest the ultimate reliance, of civilized society. Democracy, indeed, means in rich crowded and ancient States simply the surrender of all the conservative powers, all the stored energies and resources, all the organized strength of civilization, into the hands of domestic barbarism."

"I think," said Dalway, "that you underrate very much the good sense and the practical moderation of our working classes. Some Trades-unionist chiefs no doubt talk nonsense as immoral and advocate measures as extravagant and wicked as those of the French Terrorists; but the Trades-unionists, merely as counted by heads, are a minority even of our skilled artisans; and a great proportion of those who are in fact Unionists have become members of the trade societies, not from sympathy with their views, but either for peace and safety's sake or in order to share in these practical benefits of insurance against sickness and loss of employment which the Unions promise. In talking with my workmen I have seldom found among them any strong disposition towards Socialism or Communism. I do not believe that you could get one-fourth of them to vote for the confiscation of my property, even were it to be distributed among themselves. Still less do I believe that any political excitement would induce them to slaughter women and children, young girls and aged men, as was done by the Terrorists of France."

"Do you not," said Cleveland, "find among them

many self-educated men who take the lead on occasions of strike or class dispute, and put themselves forward in elections; who, when you get them to speak frankly, express ideas which, if worked out, lead distinctly first to partial confiscation on one plea or another and ultimately to downright Socialism?"

"I have found such views prevail," said Dalway, "with here and there a few of the class you describe, and those vague ideas would no doubt be cheered—perhaps because they *are* vague—at meetings of the more ardent and excitable trades-unionists; but they certainly are not the ideas of any considerable proportion of those artisans with whom I have on many occasions been brought into more or less familiar contact."

"Probably not," said Cleveland. "The majority of your artisans are of course men of the last generation, educated in its ideas, among which was a certain reverence for the Commandments, and especially for the eighth; and to them the new ideas are uncongenial, and not easy of assimilation. But do you not find that those who do entertain such views, tending more or less directly to confiscation, are some of the cleverest and the most active of class leaders; and do you not perceive that these views find favour with the new generation, and not only among uneducated operatives, but also among the educated or rather half-educated youth both of the working classes and of the lower sort of small tradesmen who stand on the same level? You admit this? Well then, do you not see that the notions entertained to-day by the few original and influential minds of one generation of workmen and by the most active and lively of the rising men of another,

are the ideas most likely to prevail with the majority of their class after a few more years? These particular views, moreover, will spread far more rapidly than new ideas are wont to do; both because they appeal forcibly to the imaginations and the fancied interests of the multitude, and because the old-fashioned restraining principles which would have made confiscation appear to our fathers simply a crime against God and man, are losing the definite irrefragable authority of old, not merely over the consciences of the ignorant but over the convictions of the educated. Their superhuman origin is rejected by many of our most thoroughly cultivated intellects, and is not likely to retain its hold on the generation now growing up daily into practical control of affairs."

"It seems to me," said Mrs. Dalway, who had listened attentively to the conversation, "that your whole argument and all your anticipations are based on the assumption that the present order of things is the only one under which social stability or civilization is possible. Your contempt for the present age seems to arise from a belief that all the progress of the last fifty years has tended in a wrong direction; that in approaching however gradually towards equality, we are necessarily degrading what is highest and best among us to the lowest level, not raising the lower towards a middle if not the highest standing-ground. All you have said in praise of the feudal system confirms me in this idea. You speak in fact as an ultra-Conservative, or more accurately as an old-fashioned Tory, to whom the Revolution itself seems at best a necessary evil, sacrificing Legitimacy to Protestantism; and whose ideal of

social order and prosperity is to be found in the reign of Charles I., or rather perhaps in that of Elizabeth; in days when the multitude were content to take their religion from the priest or the Crown, and their laws from the nobility, and when only a few ambitious men ventured to dream of rising above the rank in which they were born, while no one even dreamed of raising others."

"You are in so far right," answered Cleveland, "that I certainly hold with the late Lord Lytton that 'no nation which aspires to equality is fit for freedom.' I admit however that not merely the tendency of the present generation of men, the course of our immediate politics, but the entire current of thought and of movement in modern Europe, sets towards equalization; a complete and very speedy equality of legal rights and privilege, a gradual it may be and slow equalization of fortune and worldly enjoyment—if violent convulsions are to be avoided, and our civilization is to be sustained—and a still slower approach not probably to equalization but to less glaring inequality of culture refinement and intellectual power. Nor am I confident that these tendencies are absolutely ruinous, provided they are allowed to work themselves out quietly and peacefully without legislative or other violence. That which appears to me to augur worst for the permanent security of a civilization essentially dependent upon property—and based (as all human progress and order, even the most rudimentary, have always been based) upon the primary institution of the family—is the extreme impatience of the safe slowness of natural progress manifested by the many, and

by those especially who aspire to be their leaders. I find some thoughtful democrats alarmed by the popular disposition to hurry the process of equalization by means which threaten to destroy property and dissolve the family."

"I will say nothing," answered Mrs. Dalway, "for the present about the family, though I might be disposed to argue that in its actual form that institution is so iniquitous and unnatural as to do more harm than good. But I will ask you why property—that is to say, the exclusive possession of certain portions of the wealth of the community by individuals—should be essential to civilization? No doubt the present, and, so far as we know, all past forms of civilized society, have been based upon private property; and the motive power by which wealth has been created and man's control over nature extended has been the desire of accumulating property—the self-love or selfishness of the individual. But I cannot see, and you certainly have not proved, that another and perhaps a much higher and happier civilization might not conceivably be founded upon an order of things in which no individual should have an exclusive control of any part of the accumulated resources of the community. And there is this in favour of such an idea, that whereas in primitive times such wealth as was produced, not stolen, by its possessors, was to a great extent created by their individual energy and exertions; all wealth, all valuable property nowadays is created by the common efforts of great numbers, and the largest share of it is generally appropriated by those who have laboured least in creating it."

“Your last sentence” replied Cleveland, “involves a very common oversight; involves, indeed, the radical fallacy (very generally hidden underground even when its visible outgrowths are most mercilessly hewn down by the axe of the economists) whereof nearly all forms of Socialism are the issue—from which spring not a few of those political extremes which I have depreciated if not deprecated—the disposition to count, not to weigh, whether the subject of comparison be human exertions, human opinions, physical or intellectual forces. The man who has laboured least, in your phrase—that is, who has given the fewest hours of direct, actual, visible effort—may have contributed far more than all his fellow-labourers put together towards the joint result. Economists tell us indeed that where two agencies, such as those of capital and labour, are equally necessary to a result, we cannot say which has contributed most to it and therefore cannot apportion their rightful share of the profits according to their respective services. This doctrine tells both ways, and if it were permanently tenable would in the long run tend more or less in favour of equality; since, if we cannot say how much each has contributed towards the success of a joint enterprise, equality seems the fairest rule of division. But on a large scale we have means of rough measurement whereby to compare the respective values of the services rendered by capital, intellect, and direct manual labour; for we know how much the manual labour by itself could have done, and this is generally very little indeed. Whatever is more than this is the fruit of capital or of intellect. Seeing then that the manual labourers of a civilized com-

munity get many times the reward they could earn by equal labour in the absence of the accumulated resources of civilization, it is evident that the present distribution of wealth is not unfair towards them. The workman gets far more than his labour could have produced by itself. He gets a large part of that additional value which is given to his exertions by the abstinence and thrift of the capitalist, the skill of the director, and the genius of the inventor. But I revert to the earlier and more essential part of your suggestion. You admit that the motive which has induced the accumulation of capital and the exertion of inventive genius—that is to say, the motive which has created all the resources of civilization—is the desire of individual wealth. Take away that motive—as Communism and every approach towards Communism which tends to render property insecure either take it away or seriously impair it—and by what yet undiscovered substitute will you stimulate in an equal degree either accumulation or inventive activity, to say nothing of industry? You will say that the community, if sufficiently enlightened, will take care of the first; will take care always to set aside a sufficiently large percentage of its produce to increase its productive power at least in proportion to any increase of numbers. You may say perhaps that the desire of repute among his fellows, and the natural interest he has in increasing the wealth of the community to which he belongs, will induce the man of intellect to do his best even though he should share only as a common labourer in the advantages he creates. I say that such expectations involve for their realization a new creation of human

nature; a complete revolution, not in those ideas which belong to a particular race or age, and which can be modified by new influences and circumstances, but in those fundamental characteristics of mankind which, as the experience of innumerable generations and of all races proves, are common to all. You might as well hope to revolutionize the instincts of social animals like bees or ants, to turn the drone into a worker or the worker into a queen bee, as to supersede by new motives those paramount instincts of self-preservation and self-advancement which are to mankind what the honey-getting instincts of the worker bee and the accumulating instinct of the ant are to those creatures. Nor can you say that the higher influences and loftier ideas which the culture of generations has introduced among the highest races now living will enable us to dispense with those primary paramount universal human instincts and motive powers. Communism has been tried repeatedly within the memory of men now living. It has been tried, not as it would have to be tried, if the revolution contemplated by your theorists were accomplished, with average human material, but with the very best that could be chosen. It has been tried always by selected individuals; by communities composed of those exceptional persons on whom your new unselfish motives exert the strongest influence, and who had an enthusiastic faith in their sufficiency. And yet the experiments have been disastrous failures; and but that there existed all around them a society founded on self-interest, in which the members could be absorbed, they must have perished, or relapsed into barbarism. The first condition of the success of a

Communitistic society is, then, that it should consist of human beings more unselfish, more devoted to the common welfare, than the most unselfish and enthusiastic Communists you can select from the most cultivated and unselfish classes of existing society. I do not say, I do not believe, that even on such a condition it could prosper; but experience has clearly shown that without the realisation of this condition—that is to say, till you can get a race superior in self-devotion and in co-operative aptitude to the picked enthusiasts of the present generation—all forms of Communism must be failures. And a failure on the grand scale, when legislation adverse to property has turned an entire nation into a Communitistic society, means, as I have said, a relapse into utter barbarism.”

“But,” I interposed, “you are surely mistaken in saying that all Communitistic experiments have failed. The Shaker communities have prospered eminently, and have surely lasted long enough to prove that they might continue to prosper until—if children were born among them—inherited habits and education might train a new race of human beings in whom the communitistic instincts (I don’t know how the barbarism ‘altruistic’ was constructed) might be stronger than the selfish.”

“I have not forgotten them,” said Cleveland, “but your saving clause, ‘if children were born to them,’ is of vital significance in more than one respect. It shows, in the first place, that Communism owes its one success in these extraordinary societies to a religious idea powerful enough to supersede and dominate the strongest of all human passions and desires,—the strongest, next to hunger, of all animal instincts; and to control it, not as in convents where the sexes are

separated, but in societies where they are in daily intercourse. Surely the fact that Communism succeeds only under the stimulus of a religious faith powerful enough absolutely to silence the most imperious at once of animal passions and of human affections, confirms in the most decisive manner my doctrine that the success of Communism requires a total revolution in human nature. I will grant that when you have so utterly revolutionized humanity as to bring its dominant passions under such unlimited subjection, you may make Communism or any other unnatural system succeed. But to say that you must wait till you have done this is, for practical purposes and as affecting any rational estimate of times within the reach of conjecture, to say that you must wait for ever,—that Communism is unnatural and cannot prevail. All the powers of education and of civilisation acting together are weaker than the instinct which Shakerism has suppressed; and not only civilization, but civil society itself, might well break down utterly under a strain far less severe than that which this sole successful form of Communism puts upon humanity. Again, the abolition of the family, which is the radical principle of Shakerism, destroys one of the strongest incidental motives which sustain at once the productive and the acquisitive instincts, as these operate in any known form of organised human existence. Men who have neither children nor wives, parents, brothers, or sisters to profit by their wealth, may well cease to covet it; but then they would also cease to care about producing it. Moreover, I have been told that the Shakers have made little or no progress; that they have simply preserved the productive means and method they have inherited

or imported from a society founded on property, the family, and self-interest; but have developed no new power and invented no valuable improvements in the methods even of those simple industries to which they are chiefly devoted. Finally, their system gets rid of one inherent and incurable difficulty of Communism—the question of numerical increase. A Communistic society with a limited territory would find its comfort diminished, or its labour increased, with each considerable addition of its numbers. It would therefore regard such addition with jealousy, and either an intolerable and thoroughly dehumanising tyranny must be exercised to prevent multiplication, by methods and inquiries that would of themselves barbarize a nation; or those who had few children would bear a bitter grudge towards those whose more numerous offspring either enhanced their toil or diminished their comforts.”

“Moreover,” said Dalway, “I take it that before we approach a reorganization of society founded on Communistic equality, we shall have gone through a legislative process of destruction by which the present motive power of human invention and industry, the desire of accumulating wealth, will have been fatally impaired. We shall have been rendered idle and industrially demoralized for two or three generations by that insecurity which, as you say, interferences with private property must cause; and the existing civilization would, according to your apprehensions, be undermined, if not destroyed, before any general attempt was made to reorganize and preserve it on a Communistic basis.”

“Yes,” answered Cleveland, “the destructive forces seem to me to be gaining strength at present much more rapidly than the constructive. And one of the

fatal errors of really well-meaning revolutionists lies in this: that, having commenced with destruction, they have usually, and I think must always have, exhausted the social force at their command before they come to the process of reconstruction; if, indeed, they and all like them—all men capable of social leadership—have not had their throats cut in the meantime. The motive powers that would be required to make that *tabula rasa* of existing order on which at last a Communistic reconstruction might begin, would be so tremendous—would so completely exhaust the energies of society, and destroy so large a part of those most necessary for the re-establishment of any form of social organisation—that we should be much more likely to fall back (as did revolutionary France) under the rudest and simplest of all organizations, military despotism, than to rebuild society upon a highly complicated system, requiring precisely that vigorous national youthfulness, full of hope and enthusiasm, whose superabundance characterizes the commencement of a revolution, but which revolution inevitably saps and destroys. Social convulsions, especially when accomplished by violence in the teeth of the upper and more cultivated classes, have invariably used up those elements of human energy chiefly needed for constructive purposes. Revolutions are begun by a generation full of passionate hope and enthusiastic credulity, such as were the Puritans of England and the Socialist dreamers of France. They give birth to a generation which hopes nothing from new things, and believes in nothing old; a generation like the subjects of Charles II., ready to hunt down Puritans and hand them over to the horrible torture of the boot; equally ready, within a year or two, to hunt

down and hang Royalists; glad to kill, but resolute to run no risk of being killed. To that generation Lauderdale and Sunderland were models of statesmanship, and the ferocious cruelty of Lord Russell or the hireling patriotism of Algernon Sidney the highest types of public spirit. Such a generation stared in stupefaction at the chivalrous loyalty of Dundee or the stubborn fidelity of Carstairs; they took the bribes of Orange, and spent a fraction thereof in procuring pardons, by way of assurance against the restoration of King James. Such was the temper of the Frenchmen who, having escaped by good fortune alike the suspicions and the punishment of the Terror, bent in contented servility to the pedantry of the Directory, the sceptical autocracy of Napoleon, the clerical Legitimism of the Restoration; and completed a career of consistent baseness by applauding the clever scamp who stole the crown of St. Louis, and only just overreached himself, after eighteen years of falsehood and fanfaronade, in trying to embezzle that which among Continental royalties stood next in antiquity and splendour. Such was the generation whose youth was incarnate in Robespierre, and its decrepit rottenness fitly exposed to the loathing and disgust of Europe by the infamy of the Montpensier marriage; which unparalleled glory could not keep true, when fortune once turned, to the Tricolor; in which the splendid tradition of centuries could inspire no reverence for the Lilies! Is it of such stuff that you will build the grand edifice of Positivistic Socialism — an African mud palace, its walls cemented with cow-dung, and its foundations resting, like those of a 'suburban villa' of to-day, upon the rubbish-heaps? Apart from the rottenness of its material, Communism would be, in one

point, a point of extreme immediate moment, weaker than any other of the weak political systems which history has shown to be the inevitable aftergrowth of Revolution. These systems owe what little strength they possess to the anxiety of the propertied classes to save or recover their property, and to uphold any form of order which promises to secure this single end. Under a Communistic system no class would have much to risk, and the educated classes would have everything to regain by its overthrow."

"I think, on the contrary," said Mrs. Dalway, "that the most numerous and therefore most powerful class under a Communistic system would look back on its position in the now existing world with a horror and hatred similar to that with which the peasantry of France, ever since the Revolution, have regarded the Ancient System. As it has been found utterly impossible, amid all the changes France has undergone, to revert by one single step towards the Legitimacy associated in popular memory with the oppressive exactions of hereditary landlords, so the one thing impossible, after Socialism had once triumphed, would be to restore the rule of private property under which the few had so much and the many had nothing. But I do not wish to argue this question now. I would rather hear you discuss it with one or another of those among our acquaintance who have thoroughly studied the theory of Communism, and earnestly believe in it. What interests me more at this moment is your theory of the probable doom of existing civilization, which seems to me to savour of superstition. Why should you found on the mere historical fact that all previous civilizations have perished, a belief that civilization is essentially

unstable and perishable—unless, indeed, you think it unnatural? Those highly advanced Empires and States, whose relics or whose records remain to us, were apparently isolated political organisms in the ocean of barbarism, whose mere force of seething numbers constantly surged up against the foundations of an antagonistic because higher and more thoroughly organised polity; always menacing, generally repelled, often beaten further back, but never to be quelled. These States lacked, moreover, those enormous destructive powers which modern civilization has introduced into war, and which gave it an irresistible advantage over any possible assailants. A very large numerical proportion of the existing human race is civilized, and its numbers constantly increase, while those of barbarian peoples wane; and the only numerous and powerful races not included within the sphere of European civilization—India, Japan, and China—are *not* barbaric, and have shown no inconsiderable power of assimilating at least the material, if not the moral elements—the results if not the principles—of our own culture. Unless, then, you suppose that there is something inherently unreal, artificial, uncongenial to human nature in civilization itself, I do not see why the fate of former civilized empires should be regarded as an omen of the probable destiny of a civilized world. It is said that history never repeats itself; and I should think that the destruction of a civilization so gradually built up, so extensive and so continuous in area, and so powerful in mere military resource as our own, was about the least probable of all imaginable reproductions of historic precedent.”

“I grant,” said Cleveland, “that, though not impossible, it seems to me hardly within the scope of rational

conjecture that modern European civilization should be destroyed by attack from without; yet I presume that in the reign of Augustus the Roman Empire thought itself even stronger in comparison with any possible assailant than any one modern State now appears; and it is at least conceivable that the civilized world might be so weakened by intestine strife as to fall a prey to feebler antagonists, a thing which could not happen when, as under the Roman Empire, nearly all the civilized world—except the isolated and stationary civilization of Southern Asia—was under one government.”

“Surely,” answered Dalway, “the civil wars of the Empire did much to wear away its strength in intestine conflict, and, consequently, to prepare for its overthrow by the Northern barbarians.”

“I very much doubt that,” replied Cleveland. “None of the Imperial civil wars lasted long or involved great slaughter, unless we should except that which finally established Constantine as sole Emperor; and long before that date the Imperial frontier had receded, either through actual defeat or conscious exhaustion, at almost every point of contact with vigorous and healthy barbarism; Rome had commenced her retreat before Teuton and Goth on her northern, and even before Parthian and Persian on her eastern borders.”

“But,” rejoined Dalway, “there was one essential defect, common, I fancy, to all the ancient civilizations, which would account in great measure for their inherent weakness. I know little or nothing of the history of those most ancient empires whose buried remains and records have been excavated and deciphered within the last thirty years; but I presume that, in common with nearly all the ancient world, they were poisoned or

cankered at the heart by the blight of slavery; that, in point of fact, the great body of the population were more or less absolutely bondsmen or serfs. This was certainly the case with Rome. We find that under the Empire the oldest, the most loyal of its dominions, the once densely-peopled and highly-farmed lands of Italy and Sicily, were in general distributed into great estates imperfectly cultivated by vast gangs of slaves held in subjection by merciless terrorism, maintained by frequent examples of savage cruelty. Consequently Rome had no large hardy free population from which numerous armies could continually be drawn. The higher classes became effeminate and luxurious, as the masters of slaves naturally become. The lower class of freemen dwindled in numbers, and those who remained, gathering gradually into the great cities and especially into Rome herself, there degenerated into a populace baser, more abject, and also more dangerous, than the Lazzaroni of Naples. Is it not substantially true that, even before the military decay of the Empire was made apparent by defeats on the frontier, it was from this decay of population in its heart obliged to recruit its armies chiefly from among the barbarians themselves, or from those frontier races which had been least completely and most recently infected by or subjected to its degrading civilization?"

Here for the first time Mrs. Cleveland interposed, with sparkling eyes and heightened colour. "How can you say," she asked, "that slavery renders a race of masters degenerate and effeminate? Are there at this moment in Europe braver or better soldiers than those who followed Lee and Stuart and Stonewall Jackson? Recent wars are said to have shown that

with equal arms no courage and no generalship can stand long against superiority of numbers. The Southerners fought for four years against odds of five or six to one. They were not more than one to two, or two to three, in any of the great battles by which their martial renown was established. They held their own in several sharp campaigns. They were never beaten on equal terms in the open field. They endured want, fatigue, hardship far severer than any that ever tried their opponents. Our people then, slave-owners as they were, proved themselves superior in all the qualities of men and soldiers to the Northerners, the majority of whose population consisted precisely of those agricultural freemen and freeholders of whom it is the fashion to speak as the hardiest and readiest recruits, the best military material. Could you ask for a clearer proof that slavery does not tend to make slave-owners luxurious, effeminate, or timid? The Spartans, again, the best soldiers of Greece, were slave-owners *par excellence*. If it had been true, as our enemies and critics always affirmed, that a nation of slave-owners rests its social edifice upon a barrel of gunpowder as its foundation-stone—if it had been true that our slaves were so discontented as to keep us in constant alarm—could there be *à priori* a better training in martial virtues, a surer safeguard against degeneracy, than the position of an imperial race holding its ascendancy by the tenure of incessant vigilance and constant preparation for conflict?"

"It is true, Ida," said Cleveland quietly, "that the Southerners proved themselves equal to any race on earth in martial qualities. But their position was a very peculiar one, and they had not been long enough released from the hardships and difficulties of settlers

in a new land to have had time to degenerate. Still I agree with you that, in the absence of a standing army, slavery does necessarily tend to keep alive many military qualities—union, discipline, vigilance, and courage—among the masters. If the Roman slave-owning nobility did, as there is little doubt they did, become effeminate and luxurious, unmanly and unwarlike, it was not because they held slaves only, but because, while slavery relieved them of the necessity of labour, a mercenary army freed them from all demands on their personal manhood, all exercise of the virtues essential to a dominant race holding by their own swords the property, position, and power those swords have won. But slavery does tend to weaken the military strength of a nation by degrees and in the lapse of generations. Had your four millions of negroes been a white peasantry, available as soldiers, the South could hardly have been conquered. Had the population of Italy and Sicily in the fifth and sixth centuries after Christ been the hardy freeholders they were in the days of Pyrrhus or of Hannibal, Roman civilization would never have been destroyed by simple Teutonic or Parthian manhood. Still it does not appear that any of the great Empires of old, except that of Rome, owed their destruction either to servile insurrection or to a deficiency of free population or of fighting men. Nor, so far as I know, has it been shown that in Assyria or Egypt personal slavery as distinct from all-commanding despotism ever prevailed to such an extent as to impair the numbers or the vigour of a freeborn martial population.”

“I should have thought,” answered Dalway, “that the very character of their monuments—the pyramids and temples of Egypt, the gigantic palaces, fortifications,

and cities of Assyria—implied the existence of an immense servile class incompatible in the long run with the maintenance of a large population of the dominant race, from which alone a trustworthy army could be drawn.”

“We know so little on the subject,” said Cleveland, “that I will not venture on any confident expression of an opposite opinion. But so far as we can judge, I should be inclined to draw an exactly contrary inference from the facts. Slavery is, as a rule, incompatible with high cultivation and an agriculture efficient enough to make the most of a fertile soil. Now the territory of Egypt was narrowly limited, and that from which the central and dominant population of Assyria drew its support appears to have been almost equally small. Babylon and her dependencies seem to have lived on the produce of the country ‘between the rivers’—the comparatively trifling extent of fertile land on the lower course of the Tigris and Euphrates—as Egypt drew her food almost entirely from the narrow valley of the lower Nile. Great works executed without vast mechanical powers such as steam supplies, imply a numerous surplus population; that is to say, a soil so fertile and so well cultivated that, while a very large population can be supported by its produce, a mere minority of that population suffices to cultivate it and to raise food for the whole. Of course, there must be a thorough organization, probably a powerful army and an irresistible autocracy, to direct the labour of so large a part of the nation to works more gratifying to the pride of a king, the luxury of a nobility, or the ambition of a priesthood, than to the feelings or interests of the people. But the possibility of so employing for many generations a large part of the

available labour of the country in utterly unproductive occupations, implies a very thorough cultivation of an exceedingly fertile soil, and seems to me incompatible with the careless, sluggish, inefficient agriculture almost always characteristic of slavery."

"Is there any foundation in fact for your cyclical theory of human progress?" inquired Dalway, after a pause. "Of course we know that there have been periods and local instances of retrogression; or rather, perhaps, of the victory of hardy half-civilized races over empires whose veneer of civilization was undermined by barbarism devoid of all barbaric virtues. We know that up to the present time no race that has lost its fighting quality can retain its wealth. But is it possible seriously to question the fact that mankind as a whole, and even each large division of mankind, have worked their way up from the lowest barbarism step by step to the highest civilization; if not from the primæval ape, yet certainly from the primitive savage—Australian or Bushman—to the level first of Homeric Greece or Arabian patriarchism, then of Egypt or of Athens, and finally of the existing English race?"

"Very possible," replied Cleveland. "The defenders of Adamic tradition and of the Fall might make out a better case than they are generally aware. The notion that man has developed out of not-man is a purely logical idea, finding no support in ascertained fact: not even in those facts which are held to prove the indefinite antiquity of the species. The oldest monuments show that race-distinction has remained unchanged for forty or fifty centuries; the oldest relics of humanity are the skulls of thoroughly developed men, not of half-humanized monkeys. Ages before the

barbarian existed the civilization on whose relics he tramples; the forests of uncounted centuries cover the graves, the temples, the fortresses of empires whose very names are lost for ever.* Of the many dogmas which, on grounds chiefly *à priori* or on very insufficient evidence, have been received by science as settled facts, none is more completely dependent on the assumption that a certain course must have been followed by nature or by Providence—none is more weakly founded in actual proof—than the idea that mankind have everywhere or even generally made steady upward progress from barbarism to civilization, from stupid ignorance to scientific, artistic, and mechanical knowledge. It is no exaggeration to say that the Cyclopean walls of Mycenæ, the temples and pyramids of Egypt, the palaces and fortifications of Babylon, would generally strain to the uttermost the powers at the command of modern engineering. We know, in the first place, that the builders of those structures were highly civilized. We know also that they relied on human strength, applied, as only an irresponsible or powerful despot could apply it, in utter disregard of national interests, with utter indifference to the suffering and the sacrifice of life involved. Mycenæ seems to have been the capital of a foreign dynasty, whose higher civilization was destroyed by Dorian barbarism. Assyrian and Egyptian civilization are historic—that is to say, we have records of their later stages, we know how and when they perished, and what forms of inferior organization succeeded them. Their fate is simply that of which history furnishes so many examples:—the destruction of a corrupt

* See Wallace's "Tropical Nature," &c., &c.

and partially effete civilization by one much lower or less highly developed; the overthrow of luxury and culture by half-disciplined but unimpaired manhood. In each case a lower but perhaps a truer civilization struck root in the ruins of the old, and ultimately overtopped its achievements. All that the two great empires of the Levant can tell us is, that civilisation is far older than used to be thought, can be traced back to a period earlier than the probable or proven origin of the earliest extant barbarism. But recent discoveries have, as Mr. Wallace has carefully pointed out, given us good reason to believe that in almost every quarter of the world the semi-barbarism with which history commences was preceded by a civilization of indefinite age, the very memory and tradition whereof has perished. Peru and Central America are said to have known a civilization far older than that which Cortez and Pizarro found and destroyed; the civilization of a race distinct from and far earlier than the Incas or the ancestors of Montezuma. Northward, on the southern shores of the great lakes, in the valleys of the Mississippi and the Ohio, a mighty people once inhabited a fertile soil, and built fortifications, cities, sacred mounds, and burial places, whose magnitude attests the existence of a social state akin to that of Egypt; capable of producing gigantic works which must have employed no inconsiderable proportion of the entire population, and which argue therefore a close organization under an all-powerful government, and an agriculture such that a vast multitude employed in unproductive work could be supported by the tillers of the soil. But the Mound-builders had not only a power of construction approaching that of the Pharaohs and

the successors of Nimrod,—they possessed also a mathematical skill of the highest order, a skill capable of constructing enormous but almost perfect circles, squares, octagons, whose opposite sides were so remote that no such rude means of measurement as are known to semi-civilized people would have sufficed to trace them. The accuracy of such structures implies instruments that could measure not merely lines but angles with marvellous precision; and, as Mr. Wallace justly remarks, a care for accuracy indicative of intellectual culture even higher than that which the mere possession of such instruments would prove. These Mound-builders had apparently perished—nay, not only they, their race, but their very memory and tradition must have perished—before the Red Indian took possession of their country and roved over desolate prairies and interminable forests where once had extended from the Lakes to the Ohio an empire comparable with that of Assyria in power, in agriculture, and even in scientific acquirements. The Great Pyramid, the oldest building in the world whose date is even approximately ascertained, is at the same time the most perfect production of Egyptian skill and knowledge, power and enterprise. This work—surpassed, nay equalled, by none of its successors down to the present day—presents features still more remarkable for their accuracy than those of the American mounds. Its sides confront exactly the four cardinal points. Its angles are exact. The proportion of its base to its height is that of the radius to the circumference, a proportion too peculiar and too obvious to be the result of chance. Thus we see that the earliest monument of the Egyptian empire indicates

not only a command of human labour, but an intelligence and a knowledge as great as any that the later Pharaohs ever reached. What is still more extraordinary, in an island two thousands of miles from any great continent, one thousand miles from the nearest land—an island no bigger than Jersey—there are found hundreds of colossal stone images weighing from forty to one hundred tons, the erection of which implies the existence of an empire approaching the Egyptian in power of concentrated unproductive labour, if not in knowledge. Such an empire could not have been formed on such an island, even if we suppose the latter to have been much larger than at present. It suggests rather the existence at some indefinitely remote period of a great naval power—perhaps an insular empire—in the Pacific. In Europe, again, we find under Swiss lakes and Danish bogs, as in English caverns and French gravel-pits, the remains of a civilization whose tools are said to have been constructed solely of stone; but whose buildings, whose domestic animals and vegetables, whose carvings on bone indicate an intelligence not necessarily or probably inferior in native powers and capacity of culture to our own. And among the relics of that age, among the earliest relics of humanity, are skulls whose possessors must have belonged not to some ape-like half-human species in the course of transition, but to a human race essentially analogous to the higher types of existing man. So far then from testifying to the Darwinian theory that man has been developed out of the ape, or is the first cousin of the baboon by descent from some common ancestor of the *primates*, Geology, wherever its records have yet been deciphered,

bears witness to the existence of man in the remotest period of his history as possessed of an elementary civilization, and of physical characteristics and mental capacity nowise different from those with which now after thousands or possibly millions of years he is endowed. To say that barbarism must have preceded civilization, in spite of all facts pointing in the opposite direction, is to press *à priori* argument beyond the bounds of reason and prudence. To me it seems at least as likely that hardships and conditions fatal to civilized life should have degraded Scandinavians into Esquimaux, or Egyptians into Bush-men, as that Fuegians or Australians should have so shaken off the yoke of habit, and the stupidity that cannot count even to the full number of their fingers, that they could develop the civilization even of Neolithic Europe—much more less that of China, of Siam, or of ancient India.”

“It was at your recommendation,” said Dalway, “that I made Bagehot’s ‘Physics and Politics’ the companion of my last walking holiday; and certainly I never found a book that better answered its warranty. But now you seem to take up a theory that cuts away the very root of all its careful, clearly-reasoned deductions:—nay more, that contradicts the common-sense view of human development on which nearly all archæologists of this generation are agreed, and which he has only worked out much more clearly and thoroughly than any other. The whole purport of his work is to show how that development of civilization out of barbarism which is now the accepted account of prehistoric humanity must have been brought about, how each improvement in human energies and every stage in what

one may call human domestication gave military preponderance to the tribe or tribes that attained it; and how, consequently, each new gain was extended over wider and wider areas, and imposed on those who had not and perhaps never would have achieved it for themselves. Now you seem to imply that civilization probably preceded barbarism, an idea which not only tears up the whole of Bagehot's admirably-developed scheme by the roots, but seems to revert to antiquated supernaturalism, since a primary civilization could only have been introduced by miracle. The first men, if developed or evolved out of some ape or ape-like animal, must have been lower than the lowest of existing barbarians."

"Nothing is more difficult," replied Cleveland, "than to bring to bear upon one another—to weigh against each other—arguments essentially and fundamentally unlike and incommensurate as are those of the *à priori* and *à posteriori* methods respectively. Bagehot undertakes to show that man must have been civilized in a certain manner and through certain general stages; to delineate what upon the whole must have been the upward progress of our race from the first beginning of human society to the dawn of history. Other writers of the same school, like Tylor and M'Lennan, have endeavoured to trace in existing superstitions survivals of a primeval barbarism; but nowhere have they succeeded in establishing or even rendering probable the existence of any primeval barbarism lower than or even as low as much that now exists. If there ever were tribes inferior in the scale of humanity and of intelligence to the Fuegians and Tasmanians, they have left no trace behind. Such archæological evidence as we possess is

in favour of the priority of civilization. Not only is it the case, as I have just said, that almost everywhere where barbarism exists, or existed when first European discoverers came upon new soil, we find beneath the existing surface of savagery the monuments of a prior and often a high civilization ; but it is equally notable that we nowhere find in history or tradition proof or even presumption of a spontaneous civilization gradually unfolding itself among an isolated race of barbarians. Tradition everywhere testifies to the introduction of civilization *from without* ; generally, of course, deifying the first civilizers, the ancestral heroes who introduced the first rudiments of practical culture—fire, metals, agriculture, civil and even military organization. Prometheus and Cadmus are but the types of traditional founders everywhere ; foreigners coming through the horizon or across the sea to communicate the arts of a pre-existent culture and discipline to a barbaric race. History itself confirms the witness of tradition. It seems evident that the Aryans brought with them into Europe a political organization potentially if not actually higher than any other race possesses or ever possessed. But their material and intellectual culture was very low, too low, it would seem, to serve as the basis of a spontaneous native civilization. Greece confessedly derived hers from Egypt and Phœnicia. That of Italy has not been so clearly traced ; but whether of Etruscan or Hellenic origin, it was not native but foreign. The rest of Europe and the whole of America confessedly received theirs from without. Historically, then, civilization has never been developed from anything that could be called barbarism by a spontaneous process. Going

back to the first or rudest—for in date the ruder may be contemporary with the higher—stages whereof archæology bears witness, we find civilization under the surface of Swiss lakes, Danish pine-woods, American forests. The tribes of the Stone Age seem to have possessed some tools that testify to the simultaneous existence of an extensive commerce, and consequently of a highly-developed civilization *somewhere*. I grant the impossibility of believing on natural grounds in a primeval aboriginal civilization; but I affirm that all evidence—except the very dubious evidence of supposed customary survivals alleged by M'Lennan and others—tells so far in favour of the doctrine that civilization preceded barbarism.”

“Yet,” said Dalway, “you admit that except by an absolute and stupendous miracle, inconsistent with all we know of actual creative method, primitive man must have been a savage lower or at least as low as the lowest existing tribes!”

“There,” replied Cleveland, “comes in the difficulty of which I spoke, the incommensurability of *à priori* necessity and *à posteriori* evidence of facts. However, I do not believe in that utter degradation of human nature, or if you prefer the phrase, that primeval anthropoid stage of gradually evolving humanity, to which, according to the author of ‘Primitive Marriage,’ his carefully collected ‘survivals’ testify. In the first place, man in his lowest existing stage could neither have coped with powerful brutes nor, in so far as I can see, triumphed over the gorilla and the other mightier apes. The loss of hair, of the prehensile foot, of the gigantic strength of the anthropoid apes, would have

placed man at a disadvantage in the struggle for existence, which only a sudden development of brain could have compensated. I fully concur with Wallace in all he has said on this subject, and hold that man could not have come into being and remained in being by the process of natural selection unaided by extensive, immediate, and carefully-directed variation, such as strict evolutionists refuse to admit. Nor do I believe in 'the ages before morality,' in 'communal marriage,' or promiscuous intercourse. I believe that infanticide and polyandry are not relics of universal or extensive usages, but artificial abominations introduced here and there by superstition or circumstances among particular isolated tribes. Bagehot's argument itself suffices to prove this. Tribes so utterly debased, so devoid of sense and social cohesion, must, if not isolated, have been exterminated at the very outset by more naturally organised neighbours. Moreover, such primeval abominations would have been a retrograde step, would have made primitive man lower in instinct and nature than the higher animals and the birds, all of which are either monogamists or polygamists. The passion of jealousy is one of the strongest and most deeply-rooted brute instincts. Man must have inherited it; and he could never have forgotten it for ages to revert to it, as we know he has done, wherever he rose finally above that brute level on which the instinct is dominant. The idea that he lost it as an instinct and recovered it as a reasonable feeling I hold to be obviously untenable; for wherever it exists, from the highest to the lowest of human races, it is not a reasoned conviction but an instinctive irresistible impulse. I believe, then, that

the patriarchal stage, that in which the family is the sole existing human society and the *patria potestas* the sole government, is probably the primitive form of human existence. It is quite possible to understand the development of the State out of the family through the tribal stage, or even the combination or federation of families or tribes into a State; possible to understand the gradual taming or domesticating process in which Mr. Bagehot discerns the pre-historic development of civilization; since he is certainly right in affirming that in war the first necessity and paramount advantage would be cohesion and discipline, and that therefore for long ages the tamer, more governable communities would conquer their fiercer, less coherent neighbours. I may point out another consideration that tells powerfully in favour of degeneration as against development. The lowest races of mankind do not occupy those rich soils and genial climates in which, according to the latter theory, man must have originated, and where, therefore, we might have expected to find the relics living or fossil of primeval humanity. They are found in the extremities of continents or on mountain plateaux, found exactly where they would have been driven by conquering races, and where, from circumstances such as those of the Esquimaux or the Fuegians, they would necessarily have lost many of the arts inapplicable to a situation so hopeless. We find that as a rule they have retained enough of civilization for their present purposes. The Esquimaux, for instance, have the weapons, the vessels, the rude arts of building and cooking suitable to their soil, sea, and climate; all, in fact, that a race of civilized men driven from Europe by the Aryan invasion could have retained in Greenland."

"Well, but," said Dalway, "I do not yet make out what you believe; whether you agree with Bagehot that man must have risen from what you call an anthropoid stage of existence; or with the orthodox that, as matter of fact, barbarians are the degenerate successors of primeval semi-civilized ancestors."

"No," said Cleveland, "I should be sorry if I had appeared to express a confident conviction on either side. I do not think we possess the means to form, or the grounds on which to rest, a definite and decisive conclusion. We cannot weigh in any scales as yet available the *must have been* against the *was*, necessity against fact, *à priori* against *à posteriori* arguments. All I can say is, that on the one hand the proof that man cannot have been originally civilized is logically almost irresistible; while all evidence, monumental or documentary, above the earth's surface, or disinterred from whatever depths, shows us everywhere civilisation antecedent, in time at least if not in actual causation and historic progress, to barbarism. Mr. Bagehot himself leaves us, when his last word on the perplexing problem of prehistoric progress has been said, face to face with that which our fathers accepted as a universal solution; which we have learnt to regard as a specially insoluble mystery—that mighty riddle, that vital fact of primeval essential race-distinction, which it is the peculiar function of the Evolutionist to explain. Why had the Aryans alone, and nearly all the Aryans, before the date of their earliest monuments and traditions, that constitutional freedom which no non-Aryan race has been able to assimilate or even heartily to desire?"

CHAPTER V.

SENTIMENTAL DEMORALIZATION.

AT breakfast next morning we were joined by the clergyman of the parish; a man of middle age, who, having spent the greater part of his manhood in charge of a parish in one of the ugliest and most Radical of our manufacturing towns, was well known both to Cleveland and to Dalway. However each of them might differ with him in opinion, both had learned sincerely to respect not merely the earnestness and industry, but the intelligence and thorough intellectual loyalty, of his nature. Many men who are in the coarser sense of the word thoroughly honest, nay more, profoundly honourable,—incapable of a lie or an equivocation, scarcely capable even of taking an unfair advantage in argument—are wanting in this last and highest development of truthfulness which I have ascribed to Philip Vere. They would not for any earthly reward palter with their fellow-men; they would not be led by the strongest temptation that could affect such natures to disobey or even to tamper with their moral conscience; but of intellectual conscience three-fourths even of these seem almost as utterly devoid as the cleverest (and therefore most corrupt) and most thoroughly trained native of the Seven Dials, after a life of professional pilfering—or what is worse,

an educated man bred in honesty who has become a swindler, a forger, or a professional speculator—is devoid of what is ordinarily called conscientiousness. They will wilfully shut their eyes to light which they know, or instinctively feel, might reveal to them the truth of ideas they hate, or the hollowness of cherished convictions. They will not merely argue in discussion with others, but base their whole lives and apparently their innermost habits of thought, on reasonings which, if they would but be half as truthful and candid with themselves as they are with their neighbours, they could not but discern to be unsound and untenable; which, if advanced in a different cause and by others, they would tear to pieces with merciless cogency and penetrating keenness of logic. They do this not for any material benefit, but for the sake (I suppose) of that which seems to them to be peace of mind; not from dread of persecution or worldly injury—which they will often face with all the courage of martyrs for those very unreal tenets or quicksand-founded ideas to which they thus uncandidly cling—but from utter dread of something unspeakably dreary, dark, painful, or confounding; which they fear, without owning the fear to themselves, may be not merely truth but truth unanswerably demonstrable to intellects like theirs. This kind of willing self-deception it is which affords some show of excuse to that arrogant bigotry so common among the scientific vulgar; the arrogance which declares that no well-informed man can really and honestly hold opinions which nevertheless are beyond doubt held and eagerly defended by men not less highly educated, or less able, and ten times more numerous

than the assailants. Since the idea of coarse commonplace insincerity is out of the question, the meaning of the charge must be sought, I conceive, in the defective experience of the accusers; in their incapacity to distinguish between conscious insincerity and that kind of paltering with the innermost intellectual instincts, that wilful shrinking from unwelcome light, which I have tried to describe, and of which probably most of us at one time or another, on one or other vital question, are half-consciously or unconsciously guilty. Philip Vere was, of all men I ever knew so intimately, the least capable of disloyalty to that intellectual conscience whose monitions are so often unheeded by men of sensitive moral conscientiousness. His most sceptical acquaintance, his bitterest friends, dared not ascribe his profound and almost passionate Anglicanism to pecuniary greed or personal ambition. Very few intellectual men care much for money for their own sake. If they desire it keenly it is for their wives and children; and Vere was unmarried. Finally, it was generally believed that he gave away more than his living had ever been worth to him; and he was known to live as hardly and frugally as the poorest and most ambitious Scotch clerk with a salary of eighty pounds a year.

Mrs. Cleveland put to him some questions with regard to parochial business and the circumstances of poorer neighbours, in whom she took almost as close an interest as the daughters of a resident English squire are wont to do. After these had been answered, she thought fit to take with feminine malice a little revenge on Mr. Dalway for his passing censure of slave-owners; which had hurt her more than might have

been expected, seeing how long she had lived in English society, and how familiar since the fall of her country she must have become with comments of this kind. But in truth defeat has rendered the women—not the men—of the South acutely sensitive and often not a little vindictive on all topics connected with their country's history and institutions. Nor can any one who has heard a Southern lady—brought up as delicately, luxuriously, and tenderly as the daughters of our own nobility—describe her own and her friends' sufferings, moral and physical, during the war, much wonder at the bitterness and tenacity of their resentment. But Ida Cleveland was too thoroughly gentle and courteous to allow her vengeance to be more than mischievous.

"I wonder," she said, "that Mr. Dalway has been able to listen with patience to our talk during the last quarter of an hour; for, Mr. Vere, it was only last night that he indignantly denied that the rich had any duties towards the poor, and I am not sure that he does not think we are committing a positive sin in helping them."

They say that "white hands do not hurt;" and this proverb has perhaps less truth in it than any of the multitude of proverbial fictions. When they choose—that is to say, whenever they see a chance of avenging tenfold some fancied wrong—white hands can hit very hard, and stab deeper than the strongest of masculine weapons can reach.

Dalway did not even reply; but Vere, turning towards him as if expecting a disclaimer, very quietly said, "I am quite sure, Mrs. Cleveland, that you have misconceived Dalway, or that he has been talking para-

dox; infected perhaps by your husband's taste for cynicism. Dalway is a Christian; and no man who is in the laxest sense a Christian can hold the doctrine you have imputed to him."

"I am sure," said Cleveland, "that many Christians hold it, and that not a few hold it on grounds which seem, at least to me, thoroughly Christian. Were it not that your balanced answers are generally so careful, I should be inclined to think that you had here made a double slip. Surely it cannot be wrong or unchristian—when we perceive that a practice is doing harm now and here, however it may have answered in the East 1800 years ago—to renounce and repudiate it. Now numerous Christians do hold that almsgiving does so much more harm than good—as, for instance, when it created the pauper colony of East London—that those who have not time to inquire closely into every case with which they would deal, or who object for various reasons to trust implicitly the trained judgment or the economic management of those who must be their social almoners, do best not to give at all. At any rate they maintain that true Christianity consists not in yielding to instinct or sentiment however kindly, but in doing, at whatever pain to one's-self or to an expectant neighbour, that which is best for both."

"I know," replied Vere, "that many economists are also professed Christians, and hold nevertheless a doctrine nearly approaching to that which you have described. But their economy has always seemed to me incompatible with their Christianity. It is not only that they hold one doctrine of Christianity good and the rest untrue; it is that they doubt that supreme

authority on which Christianity is founded. If our Master so blundered as to countenance a practice which, in every form, is morally mischievous—if He inculcated as a chief virtue what proves to be a vice—He must have been fallible on vital questions of morality; and those who regard Him as capable of such blundering can hardly be considered true Christians; that is, Christians looking to the Master for the solution of every essential problem of religion and ethics.”

“Do they,” asked Mrs. Dalway, “impute to Him any grösser blundering in political economy than the present almost universal belief of medical men imputes to Him in respect to demoniacal possession?”

“That,” answered Vere, “is a question I should not like to answer except in a course of lectures, which I could not prepare till after many months of study and of discussion with men of profound scientific acquirements, and of greater learning in the traditions and records of historical pathology than most even of the best informed medical men possess. But I think that there is one essential distinction. Demoniacal possession is not a question of all time, or a matter affecting the main principles of practical morality and conduct of daily life. Charity is. The virtue of almsgiving was inculcated by our Lord as strongly as any Christian duty; and he who sets aside, on whatever plea, a precept so positive and so clear, can hardly be consistent in giving the example or authority of the Saviour as a reason for any other part of his own convictions or conduct. If he can believe his Master wrong on such a point, how can he feel the least assurance that a similar error may not underlie every one of the Divine

doctrines? He may on independent grounds *agree with* all or any of the other precepts of the Gospel, but he agrees with and does not *accept* them; he cannot logically appeal to Christ as a decisive and final authority on any question of moral conduct; and he who cannot do this—though he may be a thoroughly good man and one whom our Lord Himself would commend as ‘not far from the kingdom of heaven,’—can hardly in any intelligible sense be called a Christian.”

There was a pause, and then Mrs. Dalway turned to Cleveland. “When you argued,” she said, “so strongly against the self-admiration of the present century, though you did endeavour to demonstrate that the acknowledgment of public and social duties was not (as commonly thought) clearer and more real now than in former times, you did not I think bear in mind the far greater tenderness and humanity of the present age, the keener sympathy with suffering and aversion to inflict it. This is surely a very remarkable characteristic of our present higher civilization, and a very decided proof that it is really higher and has exercised a deeper and truer influence on the nature of the best-trained races than the characteristic ‘taming discipline’ of any previous age. Assyria was cruel beyond anything that even your special abomination, the Terrorists, could have endured. Egypt, even if we had not the records of the Exodus, is proved by the very greatness of her public works to have been merciless, as most Oriental despotisms have ever been, in the infliction of that kind of misery which is the result of exhausting toil and insufficient nourishment. Each Pyramid may probably have cost more lives and more—far more—mental

and physical suffering than a century of war on a great scale. Sparta sacrificed every human feeling in her citizens to the one purpose of raising to the highest point the military efficiency of the State; and treated the Helots infinitely worse than a Norman baron treated his serfs, or a West Indian agent his employer's slaves. Athens had no tenderness for any but citizens, or at most for Greeks. Cruelty was an inherent element of the Roman character, deeper rooted, more lasting, and not less signally manifested than Roman courage. Even Christians in the Middle Ages cared little about the torture inflicted on fellow-Christians for an adequate object, and nothing at all for any barbarities inflicted on Jews, Mahometans, or heathens. The ferocity of the Spanish conquerors of America transcended any European barbarity, even that of the Inquisition. Now-a-days there is no civilized nation that would endure the infliction of torture on the worst criminals. We care for our criminals—that is, for our worst and most dangerous enemies—more than the knightliest members of French or English chivalry cared for captive foes of their own rank, against whom they bore no personal grudge. Our hospitals, if you will not acknowledge the general merit of charity, testify to the keen sympathy of the rich and even of the middle classes with the physical sufferings of the poor; and we can hardly persuade ourselves to hang a murderer, or flog the worst, most cruel, and most cowardly ruffians.”

“I should like,” said Vere, “to amplify somewhat one of Mrs. Dalway's remarks. I am sure Cleveland will admit that what we call humanity—sympathy with suffering, tenderness towards all our fellow-crea-

tures, or at least our fellow-men, and mercy even to our enemies and criminals—is a peculiar characteristic of the nineteenth century, and from the first in a constantly increasing degree of all Christian thought and life; while it was not present in any prior civilization of which we know anything, and does not characterize that of Oriental Empires even at this day.”

“One moment!” said Cleveland, interrupting. “I must make an exception in favour of Mahometanism. I grant that Moslem despots have retained much of their Oriental contempt for human life as such (apart from the value attached on religious grounds to the lives of the Faithful); but as compared with Heathen civilizations, Oriental, Greek, or Roman, Islam in some of its forms has done almost as much to moderate human cruelty as Christianity. Nay, and I doubt if any Moslem Government is more cruel than the Russian.”

“Making allowance for the facts that the Orientals seem naturally indifferent to human life and suffering as compared with Europeans, and that the races which have accepted Christianity were nobler and gentler by nature than those that have accepted the teachings of Mahomet, I daresay that you are right,” replied Vere. “But what I wish to urge is this. A great part of our remarkable progress in civilization during the last century and for some time previously, but especially during the last fifty years, has been of a merely material character. I do not know that railways, telegraphs, and steam machinery, or even the abstract science to which we owe these and so many other embellishments of life and additions to our physical comfort and enjoyment, can be said to have any very serious tendency really to

cultivate men and women—to render them, that is, in any great degree wiser or better citizens than their forefathers. But what I call the humanity of this age as compared with former times, the humanity of Christian as compared with any other religious law—unless it be that of the bastard Christianity taught by Mahomet—is an essential and very remarkable change and improvement in human nature itself; and this surely is the noblest success that human progress can accomplish; the most valuable result of that development of human powers, knowledge, and character which we call civilization; the best test of the comparative merits of its different forms. We can hardly say that the Romans under Augustus or under the Antonines (except in so far as Christian influences may have operated at the later date) were better or wiser, though they might be better informed on some matters of fact, than their ancestors at the very first moment at which the existence of monuments and written records indicate that they were adopting the rudiments of culture. Centuries of conquest, generation after generation of political progress and intellectual advance, ages of art and material development had left the Roman in moral and to no small extent in mental constitution little less a barbarian than the subject of Romulus; and I should think, so far as our materials allow us to judge, morally inferior to the countrymen of Caius Pontius, and only in political capacity superior to the Carthaginians of the age of Hannibal. The gladiatorial shows, the wholesale torture and massacre of slaves, as matter of course when it was suspected that some one or more among them had been actors or accomplices in the murder of their

master, argue not only a brutal ferocity of nature, but a coldblooded systematic cruelty, never surpassed among barbarians. I very greatly doubt whether all the arts and culture of Rome, Egypt, Assyria, of any part of Greece except Athens, or any part of the East except Judea, diffused among the great mass of the population more happiness or even more physical comfort, or gave, except to a cultivated few—a very few—any higher enjoyment, than might have been found in the German forests or among the Maories of New Zealand. Now surely there can be no reasonable doubt that, in the first place, the mass of the population do share very largely in the benefits of our own development of material powers, and even of mental culture. That humanity which distinguishes modern European life and thought has penetrated probably to all but the very lowest classes of society,—those in fact which may be said to lie below and almost out of reach of the organization of society itself. It relieves to an incalculable extent their physical sufferings; it secures them—not indeed absolutely but in nine cases out of ten—against that dread of actual starvation which always haunts the savage, and which must have afflicted multitudes under all previous forms of social order. It has prolonged their lives, it has eradicated almost entirely certain frightful forms of disease which cannot but have been among their worst terrors and afflictions. It has secured them from all those hideous inventions of cruelty of which they were once liable at any time to be the victims; so that no man good or bad now fears from the State, or as a rule from his fellows, anything worse than the speediest form of violent death they can

well inflict; and, as I said before, it has so thoroughly entered into human nature as to soften more or less all the relations of life throughout the greater part at least, if not the whole, of the community. Is not this as Mrs. Dalway suggests a thing of which—in so far as human creatures may be proud of anything—the people of the nineteenth century have a right to be proud; for which at least they may well thank God that they were born in this age, not 200 or 2000 years ago?"

There was a pause for some moments, after which Mrs. Cleveland rose, and the breakfast party was broken up. We adjourned presently to a shady part of the lawn, Cleveland, Dalway, and myself smoking our cigars, the clergyman declining; "not," he said, "that I consider smoking either unchristian or unclerical, but that I find it would for a variety of reasons or unreasons annoy my female parishioners, especially those in humble life, to whom I must devote the day. I smoke only in the evening, when my work is done and nobody can be annoyed thereby."

The pause and the cigar had given Cleveland time for consideration, which he seemed to need; Vere's argument not having afforded an opening for that kind of paradoxical, semi-cynical rejoinder in which on this subject he seemed to delight.

At last he said, "The humanity of which you speak has its advantages, and I will grant you to begin with two important points in its favour. The highest aim and chiefest triumph of civilization is the improvement of human nature itself. In truth the very word indicates this, as it signifies the turning of the rustic rough uncultured peasant, with many of the instincts

and habits of barbarism still clinging about him, into the citizen of a comparatively polished, intellectually quickened, refined civic community, like that of Athens, Tarentum, Syracuse, Capua, or Rome—as Rome supposed herself to be when she claimed to have assimilated the culture of Greece. A civilized man, then, is, in the original meaning of the word, a man fitted for the social life of cities; not cities like London and Manchester, but rather cities like Oxford and Cambridge, Florence and Venice; fitter for Weimar in the last century, or for the Versailles of Louis XIV., than for American forests or Asiatic deserts. Obviously the moral culture of man must rank above his material and even his mere intellectual progress, as a principal element in this process of adaptation. In so far then as humanity tends to render us fitter and pleasanter companions and neighbours to one another—in so far as it makes the relations of social life in all their varied aspects easier and kindlier—it is the supreme achievement of civilization, and does entitle an age which can rightfully boast of it to consider itself more civilized than its fiercer, ruder, or more cruel predecessors. And, again, an effect produced on the moral nature of man, as it is accomplished with more effort and at a much slower rate, is also far more durable than material achievements of power over natural forces and resources; possibly more durable under conceivable conditions than intellectual cultivation. A deluge of barbarism from without, or an outburst of that volcanic savagery which still underlies the thin crust of civil organization, might sweep away railroads and telegraphs, hospitals and churches, colleges and

schools; and it is conceivable that in two or three generations only a shadowy tradition of our arts, literature, and sciences might remain. But for a score of generations, if not exterminated by the sword or absorbed by intermarriage into a more numerous or naturally prepotent race of savages, the civilized nations would retain their comparative tameness, using the word in the sense Mr. Bagehot gave it; their capacity of organization and discipline, their cohesion, their gentleness and sympathy with one another, their dislike to inflict unnecessary pain.

This last quality is probably the latest of human acquisitions; developed, as those who apply the theory of Evolution to social life and generic progress would say, by the gradual concurrent growth of two distinct elements in our advancing nature, keener susceptibility to pain and livelier imagination. A hard race, not gifted with sensitive nerves, inflicts as mercilessly as it endures sternly and easily. A soft effeminate race will inflict wanton and often elaborate torture on those whose colour, habits, institutions or even situation render them aliens to its narrow compassion, and interpose a barrier weak perhaps in itself, but adequate to intercept the dull sluggish outflow of sympathies blunted by sensuality and habitual selfishness. The Red Indian roasts his captive as he is willing himself to be roasted; the degraded rabble and degenerate nobles of Imperial Rome enjoyed the agonies of Christians flung to the lions, of gladiators butchered by their fellows, because the stimulus of horror was a pleasure to natures on which all less exciting stimulants had palled. We are humane perforce because we

are intensely susceptible to pleasure and pain, and our imagination is quick enough to realize deeply and keenly the sufferings of others. The stimulus agreeable to brutal dull brains and jaded insensitive nerves is far too powerful for minds cultivated by the training of centuries and feelings always awake and even exaggerated; powerful enough to be acutely and intolerably painful. If, however, we deserve no moral commendation for what we cannot help, it is clear that, both as the deepest-seated and as the most influential result of human culture, tenderness to suffering and hatred of needless cruelty—what you call in one word humanity—is a paramount element of true civilization. It connotes the extent of our emancipation from the anti-social qualities which incapacitate the barbaric man for the close intercourse, the mutual dependence, of civic life. You may fairly argue that the acme of civilization is approached in proportion as we intensify the influences and develop the virtues which make intimate and close association enduring; as we get rid of the savage and substitute the social instincts; as men become more easily governable and need less government; as order and liberty become compatible in larger and larger measure. You may plausibly insist that civilization is in its essence the cultivation of all the qualities and habits which render social life more and more beneficial as its fundamental ideas and necessary conditions become more and more native and habitual to all, with less and less of conscious sacrifice on the part of each. This granted, I must take leave to question at several points the quality of moral excellence which you attach to modern humanitarian achieve-

ments. How much, for example, had pure zeal for human welfare, pure anxiety to relieve human misery, to do with those scientific investigations, political movements, and sanitary regulations that have extirpated famine and so very greatly modified epidemic disease? Must we not attribute the discoveries themselves mainly to the professional zeal of the doctors? Are not the sanitary measures still so imperfect, which have nevertheless rid our modern Europe of the Plague and the Black Death, and which have reduced the small-pox from a fearful perennial scourge to an occasional and comparatively trivial visitation, rather due to the self-protective instinct of the higher classes than to their zeal for the welfare of the lower? No doubt great things have been achieved by the passionate philanthropy of individuals. We owe a great deal to Howard. Abolitionists—of whom I am not one—would say that we owe as much or more to Clarkson and Wilberforce. England, again, is much indebted to Mackintosh and Romilly for the modification of laws so ferocious that they defeated their own end. But much of that diffused humanity of which you speak as the best characteristic of our present moral condition—a sentiment which does not generally prompt people to exert themselves earnestly for the good of others, but only causes them to shrink from inflicting pain or sanctioning, seeing, or hearing of its infliction—seems to me a very doubtful virtue and a very questionable gain to society. To begin with, it seems to have a close connection with a very pestilent moral heresy; the heresy of regarding human life as something so sacred in itself that its quality, its value to the community

and to its individual possessor or tenant, are wholly secondary considerations. This heresy generates the habit of regarding physical pain as the one avoidable evil which is on no account to be inflicted or endured if it can be helped. War as yet keeps alive in the minds of a very large proportion of the entire population of Christendom a higher ideal. So long as armies are maintained and nations hold their existence and independence by the sword, we shall always have a numerous and influential class consciously or unconsciously tenacious of the old faith—that dishonour is worse than death, and pain a trifle compared with shame. But, especially in England where the army is small and exclusively professional, the contrary view is gaining ground at a dangerous rate; and our boasted humanity seems closely associated with the lowest and meanest conceptions of human nature and manly duties. We think each rascal existence so mysteriously precious that the distinction between the man and the human cur is lost, and it becomes almost impossible to get the latter hanged for murdering the former. To men who have once learnt to think on such subjects, instead of repeating by rote the *dicta* of arithmetical Radicals and immoral philanthropists, such notions are monstrous and blasphemous, sapping the very roots of all manhood and morality. Realise this atheistic equality between assassin and victim, robber and honest worker—what is it but equality between Heaven and Hell? between the man whom Elohim created in His own likeness, and the worse than brute who has shaped himself into the likeness of Satan? We forget or care not that if we hanged all murderers of whose guilt

there is no reasonable doubt, we should probably save three times as many lives as we should take. But this is not the worst paradox or the most reckless blasphemy underlying that antipathy to capital punishment which, though consistently held and clearly avowed only by a small minority, has deeply infected the public mind—which now renders the administration of justice so capricious and uncertain, that it has become, in ears that hear the sense between the sounds, a mockery, a delusion, and a deadly peril to society. If we hesitate to hang the murderer, we unconsciously avow and rapidly develop moral infidelity of the worst character and deepest root; a scepticism fatal to the very basis of virtue, since, instead of estimating men's rights in life and settling their doom according to their worth as men, workers, citizens and parents, it lumps them all together; refusing to see that there is but one use to which God or man can put the impenitent and persistent scoundrel—to hang him out of the way of honest industry *pour encourager les autres*. The suggestion *que Messieurs les assassins commencent* has an *à fortiori* significance too generally ignored. It is not only that in failing to inflict death rigorously on murderers, we subject the guiltless to death at the discretion of individual animosity or greed. It is that we put one life on a level with another in a manner which can only be due to a half-realized semi-conscious doubt whether on the whole vice and virtue, truth and falsehood, chivalry and blackguardism, be essential opposites or mere varieties of humour and taste; whether Hannibal and Hieronymus, a Lee and a Butler, heroes and cowards, saints and swindlers, be types of radically contradic-

tory natures, or of merely divergent tempers; whether such types do or do not utterly exclude one another, requiring opposite treatment, exciting diametrically contrary emotions in the man of healthful moral instincts, and deserving exactly reversed requitals at the hands of mankind. A very clever but somewhat paradoxical journal seriously complained not long ago that seven men were sentenced to death for one murder; evidently thinking that seven 'lives' ought not to be sacrificed in retaliation for one. Putting aside the moral confusion involved in this idea of proportionate retribution, the seven lives were those of rebels and assassins. The one life was that of a loyal soldier murdered in the performance of a perilous duty. A journal which professes exalted views of morality ought, one would think, to have recognised that one such life as the latter was worth a hundred of the former—nay, that the hanging not of seven but of seven hundred scoundrels is a gain to humanity exactly proportioned to the amount of the poisonous element which a community thus eliminates by the halter. But the humanity or humanitarianism of which you speak is of so confused a character that I believe nine in ten of those who read the article in question either agreed with the argument, or at least saw nothing morally offensive or logically preposterous therein. Another journal published descriptions of the punishment of garotters by the lash. The victims were brutal scoundrels, dangerous to society, whom society would have been fully justified in exterminating like any other noxious vermin; and they had inflicted cruel injury on innocent and honest men. The flogging was

a very moderate one, limited to 25 lashes at a time. It was inflicted on men so low in the scale of manhood, so utterly animal in nature, that nothing but physical pain or privation could affect them at all. Their crime, moreover, was one that had especially terrified the community and rendered it more disposed to severity than it had ever been for thirty years before. Yet the mere fact that the lashes *hurt*—that the wretches howled under the infliction, that in one case blood was drawn from the broken skin, and that in another the culprit fainted, more from cowardice than pain—so shocked a maudlin-feeling public that the continuance of the sole effective check on one of the most alarming of crimes was for a moment imperilled. Again, why was it that garotters were to be flogged? Not because they were in the eyes of justice much deeper-dyed criminals than burglars or forgers, but because they inflicted physical injury on their victims, and because the dread of physical pain and injury is now-a-days by far the strongest and most potent passion of the respectable and peaceable classes. The case of the Indian Mutiny is the only one in which during the last fifty years, it has been the wish of English society to deal very severely with atrocious crimes, real or supposed; to strike terror by wholesale capital punishment inflicted on men who were believed to have outraged human nature itself. And here I take it that the exceptional desire for severity was due in great measure to two feelings, natural enough no doubt, but not especially creditable. The victims of the Mutiny were English men and women, while those who were to be blown from guns, shot, or hanged in

retaliation were black Hindoos. Again, the nature of the crime, the surprise, the outbreak of savage warfare, with all its horrors in the midst of profound peace, keenly impressed the English people with a sort of selfish sympathy. The apparent security of the situation, the daily life of the Anglo-Indians, their habits, language, personal relations to their friends at home, all contributed to what I may call a personal realization of the horror. It seemed as if it had happened to some of ourselves, and might happen to us to-morrow. We felt in fact that the victors were living just as we live every day; that terror—unspeakable, hideous, agonizing terror—sprang upon them as we could easily conceive its springing upon us; and this similarity of circumstances enabling and forcing us to feel as if we ourselves might have been the sufferers in place of our brothers sisters and cousins, rendered us infinitely more furious than we should have been in hearing of equal crimes committed, for example, on frontier settlers (who have consciously chosen a life of insecurity) by Caffres or Comanches. No statesman attempts to suppress by the simple means all know to be efficacious that systematic murder, in which half the populace are accomplices, which constitutes the infamy of Ireland and the reproach of the Empire. The negroes of Jamaica had meditated atrocities equal to those of Cawnpore, and were crushed with a thousand-fold less severity; yet a large class of English men and women who had heartily approved the merciless suppression and punishment of the Mutiny, joined to hunt Governor Eyre to ruin: merely because, owing to his promptitude, nothing had occurred to inspire them

with that kind of sympathetic terror which the Sepoy outbreak had caused. One large part of our modern humanity is sheer effeminacy, a shrinking from hearing or thinking of anything very unpleasant to our feelings. This is proved by the public pity accorded so much oftener to the murderer than to his victim, unless the circumstances of the murder have been such as to produce social panic; or unless something dramatic or tragical in its incidents has forcibly impressed the public imagination. The fits of wrath against wife-beaters which break out every now and then afford another proof of the maudlin nature of our sensibilities. Setting aside as mere wilful absurdity the theory of certain strong-minded women and weak-minded men that only quiet gentle and meritorious wives are beaten, experience assures us that in ordinary cases of domestic quarrel the man simply yields to intense and prolonged provocation, and the woman is at least as guilty in intention and feeling as he. The only difference is the accident of muscular force. She has used her weapon without restraint or consideration long before, driven to frenzy by her taunts and jeers, he has resorted to the only equivalent for a woman's tongue with which nature has furnished an uneducated man. But the tongue does not leave bruises or give physical pain as do the fists; and therefore those who clamour for the use of the lash against the man would be the very last to endure the revival of the ducking-stool for the woman, even when she is a notorious scold, or has been the first, the most deliberate, and the most wilful offender."

Mrs. Dalway had joined us some minutes before, and she here indignantly interposed.

"I did not expect to hear Mr. Cleveland apologise for the worst and most cowardly of all forms of brutality."

"Hardly the worst!" rejoined Cleveland, "since it is generally the most sorely provoked. Now the brutality or badness of nature indicated by a resort to violence is in exactly inverse proportion to the amount of provocation. The savage resorts to blows on the lightest motive. The lower orders of a civilized people are much slower to use violence; the gentlest and most cultivated natures endure the longest and the most patiently before employing it. The man who knocks down and kicks a fellow-workman for refusing to lend him the price of a pint of beer or for venturing to work against a strike, shows incomparably greater brutality than he who, after his wife has taunted and insulted him for half an hour, thrashes her at last. And why is it 'cowardly' to strike a woman? The phrase is often used, but I never heard a reason given for it that would hold water."

"Because," said Mrs. Dalway, "a woman cannot defend herself, cannot strike effectively in return."

"Neither can a child," said Cleveland, "and school-boys are not permitted to strike a master. Yet women do not consider it cowardly to slap their children, nor are schoolmasters called cowards for flogging unruly boys."

"Children are corrected," answered Mrs. Dalway, "for their own good. Moreover, this is an exercise of lawful authority, the other is not."

“Till within the last two centuries it was thought,” answered Cleveland, “that a wife’s promise to obey (to say nothing of domestic order or Christian doctrine) was as good a foundation for lawful authority as a child’s natural dependence; especially as it was then held that many, if not most women were scarcely less petulant and irrational, in their wayward moods, than spoilt children. But what I said was not that beating a woman is ever laudable, but that it is not necessarily more ‘cowardly’ than beating a child; and your answer does not touch that point. Of course to beat either women or children violently, without regard to their weakness, proves that a man has lost control of his temper; and in proportion as he loses that control more easily does he show a lower and less civilized nature.”

“I am glad,” said Vere, “that you grant a ready recourse to violence to be objectionable and barbaric; for that admission seems to me to dispose of great part of your sneers at modern humanity.”

“Of course,” said Cleveland, “the quiet, comfort, cohesion, security, order of a settled society—everything in fact that distinguishes a civilized and highly organized State from a semi-barbaric one—depends on the general habit of forbearance, on the general reluctance to strike save on the gravest provocation or under the most obvious necessity. But I said and I think that a great deal of our abhorrence of violence is weak, sentimental, and exaggerated. Common sense certainly condemns duelling; but the *total* abolition of duelling in England and in the Northern States of America may, in my opinion, proceed from a moral

declension worse than even the ferocity indicated by the savage duelling said to occur now and then in the South-western part of the Mississippi Valley. A society that will neither decide personal issues by the fist, nor refer mortal quarrel to fair duel-laws, very soon sinks to a lower level than is found where the sword or revolver are still in use. Such a society has learnt already to rate life and material formal peace higher than those objects, outrage to which used in England to justify duelling in the eyes of thoughtful and gentle men. When the lie direct can be given with impunity to men deficient in muscular strength, or personal discourtesy offered to women not courting the consequences of publicity, society becomes a bear-garden."

"But how," asked Dalway, "could the right of appeal to the sword on equal terms mend the matter? It only enables a scoundrel to bully and murder men as well as to insult ladies."

"Ay," replied Cleveland, "so fanatics and political twaddlers say of our death-law. 'Twelve hangings, twenty verdicts of guilty, to a hundred murders clearly made out!' Shameful enough, no doubt; but the shame is exclusively in the existence of the eighty unchanged assassins. The proven murders are the law's dead failures; those who live and go about in peace and unconscious security are its success. So of the duel. The fights—especially when the culprit conquers—are its worst failures; the unguarded homes, the foolish girls, that under the old code of honour were safe because scoundrels *don't care to be 'shot at sight' for them*, proved its value. And at this day much of the home peace and purity retained in Virginia or Georgia,

too often deplorably wanting in Boston or New York, are due to this unwritten but inveterate tenour of Southern laws and of Southern ethics. There are wrongs which cannot practically be redressed by law. The total prohibition of duelling by social opinion indicates that society has ceased to consider the perpetrators of these wrongs worthy of death, or their prevention worth the risk of life. So long as gentlemen generally will rather risk life and limb than submit to an imputation on their honour, so long as they value the reputation and the chastity of their women more than their own interest or safety, social opinion will always sanction duelling and no law can put it down. The abolition of capital punishment for the worst outrage on women—the most atrocious and cruel of human crimes—equally marks a profound depth of moral deterioration. The shamefully lenient penalties inflicted in such cases when fully proved show how thoroughly even our Judicial Bench is demoralized. I cannot myself believe that if such offences were not almost as rare as horrible, we could avoid a return to Lynch law; since husbands, fathers, and brothers will never be satisfied with any penalty short of death. And yet I have listened with intense disgust and surprise to deliberate suggestions—not from men of low and gross natures only, but from cultivated and high-spirited gentlemen and even from soldiers—that female honour is not more precious than life to women themselves; that no English matron would imitate Lucretia, or willingly be shot by husband or father when mutinous sepoy or negro insurgents were storming a garrison. It puzzles me

to understand how men so thinking of women can degrade themselves by marrying partners so debased; and assuredly a society in which such ideas prevail has lost much of its manhood in cultivating its vaunted humanity."

"It may be," said Vere, gravely and very quietly, "that you mistake the meaning of that change in the law which you so bitterly condemn. I have always understood that it was prompted chiefly by a general conviction that the capital penalty was more often employed to compel by terror submission to boundless extortion, than appealed to or enforced against men really guilty. You know even now how commonly it is believed by intelligent and experienced men that false charges are much more frequent than true ones. As to duelling, it was always utterly unchristian, inasmuch as it was essentially vindictive. It lost, moreover, its sole foundation in reason, from the moment when the utter falsehood of the old theory of the Ordeal was universally recognized. If God always or generally gave victory to the just cause, He might be said to sanction duelling; and an appeal so vindicated would be from a merely human standpoint reasonable. But where is the rationality of appealing for the redress of wrongs to an arbitrament in which success depends not on justice or conscience, but on steadiness of nerve or skill with the pistol or the rapier? Moreover, we all know that duelling was used by bullies more than by offended and outraged men of honour."

"I think," said Cleveland, "that you are wrong at all points as regards the duel. It was not vindictive. The gentleman who showed a murderous or revengeful

spirit therein under ordinary provocation, fell under the censure of his equals. If it did not in individual cases result more often in the death or mutilation of the guilty than of the innocent, it exercised a very serious check on a certain class of offences. It enforced good manners, and it did to a great extent protect the honour of families. You will say that duelling is more in vogue in France than anywhere else, and that in no country is the honour of families so insecure. I reply that French duels are fought with the rapier, and that two in three have no serious result. That sort of duelling imposes no effective check, no deterrent restraint on the passions of a people who care much more for what they call pleasure and much less for life than do the Teutonic races. I know that in the Southern States of the Union the tone of social intercourse (which naturally in a democratic and in an imperfectly settled country would be rougher than in England) is smoother and more courteous; and the pistol seems to afford the only clear and credible explanation. Female honour is there safer than in any country of the known world, while in the North divorces and scandals have become so common that a woman is scarcely disgraced thereby. What is the reason of this difference? That in the South a seducer takes his life in his hands. If detected, he will be shot like a mad dog. Surely even this state of things is better than the utter rottenness of Paris, or the moral unsoundness which pervades New England and New York; and surely duelling in its turn is preferable to the practice of shooting 'at sight' men who may perhaps be less guilty than the women who go unpunished?"

“Of course,” said Vere, “human life possesses from a Christian standpoint a peculiar value. The Almighty gives us such time for repentance and purification, such opportunities of redemption, as He thinks fit. To shorten the term of probation He has allowed, and thereby perhaps deprive an immortal spirit of the prospect of escape from everlasting misery He had given it, must to a Christian community appear among the worst of crimes, if it be done under any sanction less solemn and certain than that of the same authority which gave the promise of immortality itself. It is this which renders murder so peculiarly atrocious in the eyes of Christians; and this especial feature of atrocity would attach to executions as well as to murders, if we did not believe them to be authorized as well by the whole tenour of the LAW as by the command that ‘whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.’ And from another point of view duelling inspires me with especial horror. It encourages—often obliges—men so to act that one or the other must pass to his eternal account in the very commission of a mortal sin—go red-handed to the Supreme Tribunal. In every religious aspect duelling has precisely the same character and involves the same intolerable spiritual consequences as assassination, however different in a purely human point of view the two things may be—and I admit that, spiritual and Christian considerations apart, there is the widest possible distinction between fair and equal combat, and secret or sudden murder committed by surprise or by the abuse of superior strength and skill.”

“Surely,” said Cleveland, “you cannot believe that

the Almighty allows His purposes to be defeated by human agency? If His will is fulfilled when a sinful soul is cut off by typhus arising from human carelessness of sanitary precautions, surely it is equally fulfilled when life is cut short by the sword of the duellist or the rope of the hangman? Nor can we well believe that He will allow the eternal fate of any one of His creatures to depend upon any *fiat* but His own."

"So stated, the question," answered Vere, "is infinitely difficult, I allow, touching as it does the insoluble contradiction of foreknowledge and freewill. We know that, in so far as human eyes can discern His purposes, all on which the fate of a soul hereafter can be supposed to depend—the moral nature and religious faith, as well as the actual deeds of every one of us—are most deeply influenced by the action of others, by the habits of parents or remoter ancestors, by the character of our circumstances and education, and by the conduct of others influencing our own temper, will, and passions. All we can know is that this apparent dependence, not merely of earthly life but of futurity, on our treatment of one another, imposes upon individuals and upon the community a fearful and immeasurable responsibility, compared with which the responsibility arising from earthly consequences is but as a grain of sand to the mass of the entire universe."

The grave and sad solemnity with which the clergyman spoke awed all of us for the moment, and prevented any of the obvious retorts by which sceptical questioners might embarrass a theologian when dealing with the most perplexing of those terribly complicated

issues everywhere involved in the relations between time and eternity; the root of which is always ultimately found to lie in that deepest of all puzzles, the nature, origin, and purpose of moral evil. None of us, therefore, cared to pursue the topic in the direction into which Vere had turned the conversation. But after a brief pause Dalway spoke.

“It has always seemed to me that the supposed sanctity of human life—putting aside that view which Vere has taken, and with which I confess myself utterly incompetent to deal—rests upon a preposterous forgetfulness of the fundamental fact which every one of us knows and which surely underlies the whole question. If life could be perpetual—if, unless cut short by accident or violence, human existence on earth might be indefinitely prolonged—I can conceive that nothing could be so precious as life, and that no sacrifice could be too great to preserve a single human creature. But considering that we must all die, and die within a few years, the question is not one of destroying life but simply of abbreviating it. The difference between death and immortality is infinite; but the difference between fifty and seventy years of life is so small that there can hardly, apart from religious considerations, be any sacredness in the extension or sacrilege in the curtailment of a term so short at best. Surely the peace and safety of our homes, the mutual confidence of fellow-citizens, the security of millions of families, the prevention of that state of terror into which a very few unpunished murders may plunge a whole community, are of far greater importance than the prolongation of useless or

noxious lives for twenty, forty, or even sixty years. Exaggerate to the uttermost the worth to each individual of the mere sense of being, and of such enjoyment as the coarse natures of criminals can find in their daily existence; still you cannot find therein anything that can render those existences half so sacred as the objects for which we destroy them; the preservation of social peace and order, or even the security of that property on which depend, as Cleveland says, civilization itself and all the potential and actual gratifications to mankind now and for ages hence which civilization involves."

"Perfectly true," said Cleveland, "and though the point has seldom, so far as I remember, been introduced in any debate, Parliamentary or other, on capital punishment, it is nevertheless the fact that the sanctity of human life whereof we hear so much is at most the sanctity of a few years of an utterly precarious existence."

"But," said Mrs. Dalway, "surely the point is not mentioned simply because it is taken for granted. Every one knows and assumes in the argument that life is at once terminable, brief, and uncertain."

"No," said Cleveland. "What your husband means, and what I meant, is that in speaking of the sanctity of human life, and in all their reasonings on the subject, the assailants of capital punishment speak as if the criminal would live for ever were he not to be hanged. What 'we take from him' is *not* 'his life,' but his chance of living for a number of years which may be infinitesimal and cannot at the uttermost exceed a certain and very narrow limit. Nor does it

seem to me that the Christian point of view justifies, any more than the Epicurean, the expression to which we demur. In the first place, the Creator Himself teaches us, by rendering life *on earth* so brief and so uncertain, that it is of less moment than we are inclined to suppose it; next, on the Christian theory, it is not existence that we terminate, but simply one phase or period thereof."

"You have assumed," said Mrs. Dalway, "that murderers always belong to a low grade of humanity; in fact, as I understand you, to the class of professional criminals or to one nearly as degraded. But surely this is an error. I have always understood that murder was about the only crime committed by men and women of all ranks in society; not perhaps with equal frequency, but at all events with a frequency so far equal that murder is not—as nearly all other crimes are—characteristic of the classes lowest in social status, and of natures known on other grounds to be low and brutal."

"There is truth in what you say," said Cleveland, "though I think you will find that three murders out of four are committed by men below the rank of regular honest labourers. But granting that now and then a murder is committed by some one who is not otherwise a criminal, and who but for that one act might have lived a useful and a happy life, I do not think that the force of my argument is seriously weakened. Nothing would diffuse such terror and consequent misery through society as a frequency of murders sufficient to make life seem insecure from violence; or, what is still more terrible to the imagina-

tion, from secret poisoning or hidden snares of any kind. And the sacrifice of every real murderer's life would be a very cheap price to pay for the prevention of such a permanent panic. The suffering inflicted and the human enjoyment destroyed by hanging, say, a hundred persons yearly—though the three thousand years of life we may at most suppose to be thus cut off should belong to those higher types of human character, which are most keenly susceptible both of pleasure and of pain—would be infinitely small in comparison with the suffering averted and the enjoyment of life preserved by causing people to feel that the risk of being murdered is too small to be seriously regarded."

"But," rejoined Mrs. Dalway, "is not your very horror of murder—inspiring your wish to have murderers more regularly and certainly hanged than at present—a sentiment of the very kind you have been depreciating as indicating degeneracy of feeling in the present age? If we overrate the value of human life in this nineteenth century, is not our effeminate horror of violence and physical pain displayed—does not that over-estimate show itself—just as much in our horror of murder as in our reluctance to hang the murderer?"

"No," said Cleveland. "It is not the fear of violent death that gives to murder its power of inspiring panic and horror throughout a community. It is the sense of constant insecurity it creates, and creates especially when committed by men not recognized and watched as habitual offenders. It is said that the bravest soldiers will seldom face the danger of passing

over ground they believe to be mined—I might add, of sleeping within range of an enemy's guns—though they will cheerfully encounter far greater chance of death in open battle. Similarly the strongest nerves have given way, the most daring courage failed, under a consciousness of perpetual insecurity such as the fear of assassination inspires. No nerves will stand incessant unseen danger; the perpetual presence of an invisible peril. If every one were sure that he would be warned a week or a day before being assassinated, or if murder were only committed by open attack, it would be scarcely more terrible to ordinary men than the risks of the battle-field, or than perils which most of us in youth are willing to encounter in hunting or travelling in wild regions. It is the sense of ever-present enmity and danger—the impossibility of eating, sleeping, taking one's pleasure, in safety—that causes such intensity of panic as we used to see in a town where a few murderous burglaries had taken place, and still more in a society where, as has occurred sometimes in the Middle Ages, an epidemic of poisoning has been detected—or again, during an outbreak of agrarian crime in Ireland.”

“You seem,” said Mrs. Dalway, “to share the view of an eminent philosopher, that a decay of strength, moral and intellectual, is a principal characteristic of the age and is closely associated with our enhanced sensibility. I have never been able to accept this view. It seems to me that in every way our actual vigour is increased; that the change is perceptible only in a marked reluctance to appeal to force, perfectly compatible with consciousness of irresistible superiority. I have been told

that prize-fighters very rarely quarrel, unless it be with one another; knowing that their immense advantage in personal conflict would place them at a grave moral disadvantage when their conduct came to be discussed among their associates, or in a court of justice. Moreover, no doubt, their knowledge that they could if forced to it pound their opponents to a jelly in five minutes, makes it easier to keep their temper. Nothing seems to provoke men to appeal to the brutal and senseless arbitrament of force so much as a secret doubt of their power to do so effectively, which drives them to put the matter to practical experiment. A phrase of Bulwer's in 'The Pilgrims of the Rhine,' 'mild with the consciousness of unquestionable power,' has always seemed to me to express a true idea, whether applied as he applies it to the Deity, or to man. It is the fear of opposition or defeat that makes men angry and violent in the expression of their will. So the consciousness of tremendous power may naturally make an age like this averse to all displays of material force; and it thus gets the credit of weakness precisely as, among savages who have never learned to appreciate the irresistible weapons of civilization, European forbearance is generally mistaken for fear."

"I do not," replied Cleveland, "feel by any means sure that Stephen is right even in the sense to which the context limits his statement. Of course neither he nor any one else supposes that men are declining in physical strength; while every one knows that their power over the forces of nature increases enormously from generation to generation. But the weakness Stephen imputes to the age is rather want of fortitude

than want of force. Excessive nervous susceptibility, while it is compatible with great muscular strength, impairs beyond doubt the power of endurance, often the vigour of will and the total effective force of an individual; and in the same sense it may, and in some respects certainly does, impair the force of a community. Our forefathers would never have endured the anarchy, the class and sectarian defiance of law, which have prevailed even during the last half century in Ireland, if they had possessed that clear indubitable power to suppress it of which we are perfectly conscious. Moreover they would have recognized the duty which we forget because we are so anxious to shirk it. A government is bound before all things to govern; to protect at any cost the lives, property, and civil rights of loyal subjects and law-abiding citizens. It is a simple and absolute duty to imprison, flog, shoot, or hang any number of rebels and assassins whose punishment may be necessary to this end. But we are so horror-stricken at the thought of terminating promptly lives whose continuance is incompatible with social peace and prosperity;—we so shudder at the notion of inflicting severe and therefore effectual pain on the disorderly—that we allow the country to remain, generation after generation, poor, miserable, anarchical, and disaffected. We are, moreover, so ridiculously superstitious about the means that we sacrifice the end. What is the use of Parliamentary representation; what the value of trial by jury, what are the laws of evidence worth, except in so far as they secure justice and good government, the punishment of the guilty and the protection of the innocent? Every intelligent Englishman with the

slightest experience of politics, or knowledge of Irish history and of present Irish life, knows that in Ireland these instruments and forms contribute to defeat the purposes for which they exist; yet no statesman has the courage to prefer the end to the means—to propose that we should set aside a system which has evidently failed, and govern Ireland as we govern India, till Ireland is so far civilized as to be gradually fitted for English laws and liberties. Here, assuredly, modern England displays a miserable weakness; and that weakness is mainly due to the humanity we are so prone to parade and which we think so incontestable a proof of our superiority to our predecessors. England is the highest specimen of the civilization of this boastful nineteenth century; and Ireland under imperial rule is a standing proof how shallow, incomplete,—perhaps I might even say how flaccid, hollow, and degenerate—that civilization is.”

“Surely,” said Dalway, “you overrate very much the importance of Irish sedition and Home Rule twaddle. Do you really think that it would be worth while to abolish trial by jury, and to hang fifty Fenians, to suspend a dozen journals and disfranchise twenty or thirty constituencies, in order to silence a score of troublesome Parliamentary speakers, to whom no one listens and whom no one believes to be sincere; or to prevent some insolent half-educated priests and ill-bred laymen from uttering stupid impertinences about the Queen and the Union Jack.”

“Certainly not,” rejoined Cleveland, “if these things were the substance, and not merely the symptoms of the evil. The Home Rulers in Parliament are

a nuisance ; but in the present state of Ireland their presence there, and the tolerance accorded to their insolent and factious talk, is useful as a safety valve for passions that might otherwise find vent in action. But that open defiance of and opposition to the law to which Home Rule Members of Parliament give cautious expression, pervades the entire industrial organization and social life of Ireland ; makes the lives of improving landlords insecure, repels English capital, prevents the progress of agricultural science, retards every kind of growth, and keeps Ireland, in civilization, prosperity, education, and happiness, a century behind the naturally far less fertile Lowlands of Scotland or the Northern counties of England. And our whole system of self-government is a farce, a mockery—and worse than either, a snare and a peril—when applied to a country where a majority of the inhabitants—whether from fear, folly, or passion—are hostile to all government, and use their privileges to defeat the law we invite them to enforce. No man can do what he will with his own in Ireland but at the risk of his life. And it would be better to carry out Cromwell's principle in all its severity,—to give the disloyal population the choice no longer of Hell or Connaught, but of Hell or Illinois, and to give the chiefs of agrarian murder-leagues and treasonable plots no option at all—rather than to allow this state of things to continue for a single year. The very fact that this doctrine sounds like a paradox, and that no English newspaper would venture to print it, shows how demoralized English opinion has been by that

extravagant estimate of human existence as such, apart from its uses, which can scarcely distinguish between the worth of a Newton's life and that of a pilfering tramp's; and by those superstitions which sacrifice government itself to particular forms of governmental machinery."

"You talk," said Mrs. Dalway, "like a Tory of the last century. Surely there is some force in the doctrine commonly received among Englishmen, that the general discontent and disaffection of a people must be ascribed to something radically vicious in the nature of the Government."

"Of course!" retorted Cleveland, "and I think I have just pointed out where the radical vice of Irish government lies. Of course, Ireland will never be contented while she is poor and unprosperous; and she will always be sunk in poverty and debarred from progress while life is insecure and the rights of property can be exercised only at the risk of assassination."

"You think then," asked Mrs. Dalway sarcastically, "that Irish disaffection might best be cured by suspending the Habeas Corpus and trial by jury, substituting military law and drum-head courts-martial, hanging the popular leaders and deporting some hundreds of their followers?"

"Yes!" answered Cleveland—"in time. We have governed India practically as I would govern Ireland; and the result is that the industrial and commercial classes, at least enjoying a peace and prosperity they never enjoyed before, are, if not heartily loyal to us, better contented with us and incomparably happier than with any previous ruler. In Ireland we should

have to deal with neither of the two great obstacles to our success in India—the incurable disaffection of an aristocracy whom we have deprived of power and of a career, and the ineradicable caste customs of the populace. Thirty years of peace, order, and consequent prosperity would reconcile Ireland to any rule that gave them; and despotism is at least as congenial to her people as are our imported forms of self-government.”

“Still,” Mrs. Dalway rejoined, “I can hardly think that strength, energy, fortitude, call it what you will, has died out of a generation which is spreading as fast or faster than the hardiest of its predecessors over the wilds of Australia and Canada; which fought through the Crimean war, and some few of whose members, taken by mere chance, soldiers and civilians alike, held tiny island-garrisons here and there amid the stormy ocean of mutiny that raged over half India in 1857.”

“You must remember,” answered Cleveland, “that both our colonists and our Indian rulers, military and civil, are picked out by a process of Natural Selection. Average men neither emigrate nor go to India. The Colonies draw to them only the most adventurous and hardiest of our youth, for whom hardship and risk have a certain attraction of their own. India is more inviting to natures somewhat less adventurous; but timid and unenterprising tempers prefer a tamer life at home. Above all, those who once obtain employment under the Indian Government receive a training and are invested from the first with responsibilities which cannot but call out all the manliness of which they are capable. And much stout hereditary manhood must

for some time to come be latent in the stronger members of a race which has been for centuries the most adventurous, daring, and enduring in the world."

"Are you really confident," interposed Vere, "that you don't give the age credit or discredit it does not deserve? For my part, I wish I could see much stronger and more general symptoms of that reluctance to appeal to force, especially in national quarrels, whereof Mrs. Dalway (as is natural to the weaker sex if only because it must always be worsted in such appeals) thinks so highly, and which Cleveland treats as a proof of degeneracy."

"Have you forgotten," said Dalway, "the Geneva Arbitration? That would hardly have been possible in any previous age."

"I think," answered Cleveland, "that the Geneva Arbitration, if its history be fairly studied, is the strongest evidence of the impossibility of *bond fide* arbitration as a means of settling serious international disputes that recent history affords. No strong passion was enlisted on either side. On both it was felt that war was out of the question. Yet a genuine reference to equal arbitration of the issues in dispute was found impossible. We had a claim against America not less strong, and much more clear and cogent, than any she could make against us. The Fenian invasion of Canada was a case parallel to those of the *Alabama*, *Florida*, and *Shenandoah* at most points, and wherever there was a difference the offence of the American Government was much grosser and the law against it much better defined. But America refused absolutely to submit our claim to any arbitration. Again she refused

absolutely to submit the principal issue in dispute even in the Alabama case; namely, what was in very truth the law of nations on the subject. She insisted that we should accept as the basis of the trial certain rules which hardly any English or American jurist till the Alabama escaped would have allowed to be law; so that, as a matter of fact, there could have been no arbitration had not the English Government first surrendered every point really open to controversy. When one secondary issue is decided in our favour, the award is all but repudiated. There was no arbitration upon the quarrel as a whole; and if genuine arbitration was impossible in that case, it will never be possible while human nature remains what it is. Of course arbitration may be used to cover a surrender at discretion, as it was used at Geneva and perhaps on former occasions; but the history of the Washington Treaty tells more strongly than a score of wars how absurd and impracticable is the theory of 'Peace-at-any-price,' or of an international law not backed by overwhelming international force."

CHAPTER VI.

WAR; QUOUSQUE TANDEM.

“I AM afraid,” said Vere, “that while, as you say, human nature remains what it is—that is, till nations become more than formally Christian—war will not be prevented by a sense of its wickedness and folly. But I have hoped that it might be put an end to in another way—by the very efficiency of military machinery. The means of destruction which martial science and the skill of engineers and artillerists are constantly inventing do tend to render wars shorter and much more decisive. May they not with the progress of chemistry carry this process so far as to render war simply impossible?”

“The question is a very complicated and difficult one,” replied Cleveland, “and you must remember that I am no soldier, and that discursive as my reading has been, military tactics and the science of artillery have formed no part of it. But I have talked with soldiers experienced in different wars on the subject, and have seldom found them incline to your view. They say that though wars of late have been comparatively brief, this is not as a rule due to the tremendous slaughter effected in a single battle, but rather to the rapidity

with which, owing to the great facility of movement enjoyed in modern times, battles follow on one another. In the 17th and even in the 18th centuries, one two or three pitched battles sufficed for a campaign. The rapid movements and frequent encounters of modern times commenced with Napoleon; and even Napoleon, except in his two last campaigns, did not as a rule fight many battles in a single season. Nor have recent battles been more decisive than his. The victories of Sedan and Königgrätz were perhaps more complete than Austerlitz or even Jena. But in America, where the vast distances countervailed the modern facility of movement, the conflict lasted for four years in spite of modern means of destruction, and of the immense superiority of force on the attacking side. It would therefore be a hasty and one-sided view that should attribute the brevity and decisiveness of modern war to the range and accuracy of modern fire-arms and ordnance. The latter have led to a thorough revolution in tactics and to a use of field fortifications such as was never thought necessary till the very recent improvements in small-arms. Soldiers, I think, incline to suppose that wars, if not actually campaigns, will be shorter than of old; but they think that the greater efficiency of modern fire-arms will be counteracted by earthworks and by looser tactics, bayonet-charges and charges of cavalry being already antiquated; a view certainly sanctioned by the lessons of the Danubian campaign. Attacks by infantry on regular positions will become almost impracticable (save by such surprises as that of Kars) until the defences have been pounded to pieces by cannon or made untenable by searching shell-

fire. Troops will move under new conditions of which shelter and rapidity will be the most essential, and battles will be fought at much longer ranges. But the actual slaughter is not, in proportion to the enormous armies employed, greater than in former times; and for this reason most of the professional soldiers whom I have consulted seem to believe that wars will be as practicable, and perhaps as frequent, as ever. This opinion, especially as it seems to predominate very decidedly among those who should be the best judges, is of far more value than any I can myself form; but I do not agree with it. It appears to me that in the estimate of the effect of modern fire-arms one critical consideration has been left out of the account. It may be true that as compared with the entire number of soldiers on the field the slaughter is not greater than of old. It is quite certain that no such massacres now occur as were occasionally witnessed in the days of close fighting, before gunpowder had completely modified and dominated tactics. This is partly due no doubt to the universal practice of giving quarter, but mainly, I think, to the fact that large masses of men are never brought foot to foot and hand to hand; that consequently retreat in order is far easier, and that unbroken reserves can be used to cover it. But though the army may lose no more than of old, the troops actually and hotly engaged seem to suffer very much more; sometimes in the Franco-German war, and on the Danube in 1877 very often, from one-fourth to two-thirds of the entire number engaged in a particular movement were killed or wounded. Now it does not matter how small may be the loss of troops practically

kept under shelter, if it be found impossible to bring them near enough to one another in the open to strike decisive blows ; and it is to this last result that modern warfare seems to me to be tending. I should not for my own part be greatly surprised if within comparatively few years, and owing merely to the increased precision and rapidity of fire, it should be found impossible to bring a regiment in any formation within 300 yards of the enemy save at tremendous risk of incurring total destruction in three or four minutes. I do not believe that any troops will face a fire which, before they could reach or effectively strike an enemy generally sheltered, will destroy four-fifths of their number ; and battles cannot be effectually fought if you cannot—at the critical moment and at decisive points—bring your troops to comparatively close quarters.”

“But,” said Dalway, “you overlook the fact that the improvement of artillery surpasses, on the whole, the progress of engineering, and that any defences which can be thrown up hastily to hold a position in the field will be liable to be annihilated by the enemy’s cannon before his infantry are called upon to attack them ; and then the defenders and assailants will be physically on an equality, while the defenders will be demoralized by the heavy losses sustained from the artillery fire.”

“May it not happen,” replied Cleveland, “that in so far as that argument holds good, the chief effect will be to oblige belligerent nations to fortify beforehand the main points on every important line of communication—in fact to prepare their battle-fields in advance, as Lord Wellington prepared the lines of Torres Vedras—only at a hundred points instead of one ?”

"I should doubt," answered Dalway, "whether this would be possible; whether a clever tactician would not manage to turn such defences too quickly to allow the defenders to throw up new fortifications capable of resisting artillery fire. Earthworks of ever-increasing thickness are now found almost unavailing against heavy guns, and it will yearly be easier and easier to bring into the field—say by improved railways or by traction engines—the heavier artillery which modern invention is continually producing."

"I must say," rejoined Cleveland, "that I attach great weight to the precision of modern rifles, the tremendous range of artillery, and above all to the invention of repeaters. By such means that interval in fire formerly secured by the enemy's necessity of reloading, which gives to daring troops opportunities of making a rush from one cover to another, will disappear. It seems to me that this will presently make an advance for any distance over open ground impossible."

"There seems to me," I said, "a prior question of very serious interest to England in particular, and through England to the world at large. Already there are signs that the power of fleets is rapidly diminishing. Ironclads can sink one another; and it seems possible, though by no means sure, that they might by rapid steaming be able to pass heavily-armed forts. But it appears tolerably certain that in the comparative progress of defensive and destructive inventions, the artillerist steadily gains on the armourer; that no steel-plating that can be borne on a ship of practicable size can resist shells fired from the largest guns. These

guns mounted on forts or batteries, or behind earthworks (might I not say in trenches ?), which might be thrown up by the civil population in a few days, could pierce the sides not only of any existing, but of any possible ship. Obstructions so placed as to detain attacking vessels for twenty or thirty minutes under the fire of such guns must lead to their destruction. Therefore, even apart from torpedo fire, I do not see how ironclads can long be able effectually to attack an enemy's ports, and if he simply abstains from sending out ships to fight them they can do him no other harm than to blockade his harbours. By general consent it would seem that effective blockades become daily more and more difficult. A great naval Power, then, can do little more than drive an enemy's commerce from the sea, and, under the Treaty of Paris, it can only attack his commerce under his own flag. Now it is only to the great naval Powers, and to England above all, their commercial marine is of primary moment. I fear, then, that the effective strength of maritime as compared with military nations is rapidly falling off, if not disappearing. A second-rate naval Power could probably do us more harm at sea than we could do to her, so long as she was not foolish enough to fight a pitched battle on the ocean; just in proportion as we have more to lose through the greatness of our shipping trade.

“This is a disastrous prospect for England, but it is also a disastrous outlook for the world. Naval Powers are as a rule free States, and England is the natural champion of law, freedom, and national rights. If her navy be rendered useless for aggressive purposes, and if she be exposed to greater injury, even on her own

element, than she can possibly inflict, her right arm,—which enabled her to deliver Europe from Napoleon, which may again be wanted to protect it from one of the great military empires,—is paralyzed. And if England be thus paralyzed, what small State can hold its independence, what constitutional country its freedom, save by the jealousies or the sufferance of stronger military States? Russia, Germany, and France might agree to divide Europe among them, and we could do little or nothing to prevent it unless by becoming in our turn a great military Power.”

“I don’t know,” said Dalway, “that that is a misfortune to us. We cannot be attacked at home, and our fleets can protect our colonies. If we can do nothing to attack others, and they cannot gain anything by attacking us, we are pretty sure of remaining at peace; and so long as we can defend ourselves we had better not intermeddle with the fortunes of foreign Powers, which, however great they may grow, cannot assail us with effect.”

“You forget,” answered Cleveland, “that—England, alone among important States, being incapable of raising needful food for her population—our very subsistence depends on our shipping, and that our merchant shipping might, as has just been shown, be annihilated, or shut up in our ports. Dependence on foreign flags for food would not be dignified or safe.”

“But,” answered Dalway, “if naval attack be impossible, and naval defence so easy, while we retain the strongest fleet no one can gain anything by attacking us, and therefore they will let us alone; and if we

cannot effectually attack them we shall in turn refrain from involving ourselves in war with them."

"To me," said Vere, "the doctrine of non-intervention appears something infinitely worse than unchristian or even atheistic. Without intending any personal offence, apologising most sincerely if what I say should hurt you, I must say that the doctrine that a great nation—which God has blessed above all others with security and prosperity, with wealth, courage, and all the elements of warlike strength,—owes no duty to the world at large, seems to me little less than diabolical in its shameless selfishness. Either it involves an open profession of absolute egotism such as no man would dare individually to avow, and few would consistently practise; or it rests on the assumption that nations are not responsible entities, capable of collective obligation to God or man. If one man stand by out of cowardice or indifference while another is maltreated and robbed, he is condemned and despised by all. We feel instinctively that he has failed in his duty as a citizen, in sympathy as a man, in the use he is bound to make of the strength bestowed on him by God. How then can we acquit a community of men for acting in precisely the same cowardly or selfish manner in face of outrage inflicted on another community unable effectually to defend itself?"

"Nations," said Dalway, "are *not* individuals, and as a rule they best promote the welfare of mankind by minding their own business and leaving their neighbours to mind theirs."

"I cannot believe," replied Vere, "that national prosperity and power do not come just as directly

and clearly as individual wealth and strength from the gift of God; and with His gifts comes responsibility for their use. The rule that 'unto whom much is given, of them shall much be required,' applies, so far as I can see, just as distinctly and forcibly to associated masses of men—especially to associations possessing the coherence and permanence, the unity of being, unlimited liability, and 'unbounded authority which belong to sovereign States—as it applies to individual men. Each member of the family of nations stands in somewhat the same position towards the rest as an individual member of a tribe, where law is a mere convention or custom not permanently enforced by a regular magistracy; and as a strong man in such a tribe would be justly condemned by men, and as I believe by God, for standing by tamely to witness a cruel and cowardly wrong, so must a State be condemned for similar conduct. And inasmuch as a State is not immortal and carries no collective responsibility into another life, so there seems reason in the suggestion that eventually in their historical existence States will bear the penalty whether of lawless acts or of selfish omissions; and that with what measure they shall mete withal it will be measured to them again."

"I entirely agree with you," answered Cleveland, "The more that in my opinion when a nation has become sufficiently cold, selfish, ungenerous, to witness with indifference a great crime perpetrated upon a neighbour, its individual citizens must have become as a rule too calculating selfish and cowardly to fight manfully in defence of their women and children, of the homes and property of their neighbours. If a

majority of the people have ceased to be capable of fierce indignation at an outrage which does not immediately touch their country, or cowardly enough to let fear of danger or loss restrain their indignation, they will very soon learn to feel as individuals that national honour and freedom are not worth the risk of life; that it is better to submit to any insult or wrong which does not rob them of their private property or intolerably affect their individual comfort than to peril life and limb on the field of battle to preserve their own self-respect, and the rights and liberties of their countrymen."

"There is, however," said Mrs. Dalway, "another point which has not been touched in regard to naval war. It seems that torpedoes can, or very soon will, be so perfectly constructed and adjusted as to be capable of blowing a ship to pieces at a single stroke, and without warning. At one shot, as it were, an ironclad with four or five hundred men may be instantaneously annihilated. Is not this precisely one of those dangers which Mr. Cleveland says that the bravest men will not face? Will not torpedoes render naval warfare very soon impossible?"

"If so far successful," replied Cleveland, "I should expect that ultimately they will. In the meantime they may help not improbably to revolutionize the whole system of naval tactics. Instead of building immense ironclads to carry heavy armour and several guns, nations anxious to anticipate the needs of the future may begin to build a swarm of small unarmoured gunboats, bearing, at most, armour on deck and on vital parts—lying as low in the water as safety will allow—

carrying one very heavy gun capable of firing a shell which may pierce the strongest armour, and falling into machinery or magazine, destroy the largest vessel; while the gunboat herself will be almost invisible at a distance far within the range of her gun; and offer a mark scarcely to be hit by the best artillerist—and if she be destroyed, only a score or two of lives are sacrificed.”

“Is it not possible,” said Mrs. Dalway, “that by some ingenious chemical discovery or mechanical contrivance something like torpedoes may be rendered available on land, and the balance between military and naval powers be thus restored?”

“Supposing this idea realized,” replied Cleveland, “it would only restore the balance in proportion as it rendered both equally powerless for offence, by effecting destruction so terrible and sudden, and, above all, so utterly unexpected, that neither soldiers nor sailors could be induced to face the peril. But at present it is difficult to imagine any effective employment of torpedoes on land, except in fixed positions, interrupting lines of communication or protecting fortresses where they would at most be new and more terrible mines or *fougasses*. Their operation in that way would be no novelty. It is not impossible, however, that chemistry may invent something yet more terrible than our present explosives, which, in combination with improved artillery and new contrivances for carrying enormous guns, may produce a wholesale havoc in camp, fortress, or battle-field, similar to that which a torpedo might effect at sea. A shell from an 80-ton gun, for instance, might be filled with some compressed

material as much more destructive than nitro-glycerine as nitro-glycerine is more destructive than the rudest form of gunpowder; and such a shell, pitching behind the strongest fortification, might blow a regiment to atoms. Such an invention, if not exactly or immediately probable, is certainly conceivable; and would be a more striking advance on our present weapons than these are on the weapons of the last century. And whenever such a shell is devised and used, I incline to think that war, whether on land or sea, will be very near its end; that, in fact, military science will have committed suicide by its very perfection."

"Is it not possible," said Mrs. Dalway, "that nations might agree to forbid the use of such weapons as they have agreed to forbid the use of explosive bullets?"

"Hardly," replied Cleveland. "Explosive bullets do not serve any great purpose in battle at all proportionate to the torture they inflict. A solid ball disables as completely as an explosive bullet, and therefore the use of the latter, destroying life after or while the enemy is disabled, is strictly analogous to the butchery of the wounded. Moreover, since such weapons do not contribute materially to victory, a belligerent has no temptation to use them at the risk of being punished by his enemy in case of defeat, with the consent and approval of the civilized world. But such shells as I supposed would certainly defeat a belligerent who did not use them, so that he could not punish the enemy for violating the compact. Moreover no nation, and least of all the most pacific nations, will agree to forego any effective means of protecting themselves by destroying their enemies. If they did

so their humanity would be a blunder, seeing that increased destructiveness of weapons tends, in the long run, to shorten if not to hinder warfare, and on the whole to lessen the misery it inflicts."

"Speaking of the precision of weapons," I said, "is it not possible that as we have returned to the use of armour at sea, we might return to it on land, especially if a cheap method of making aluminium were discovered? Men on horseback, and even on foot, might carry aluminium cuirasses which would repel a rifle bullet."

"The thing is possible," said Cleveland, "and would no doubt become a reality if a light metal could be manufactured cheaply enough. But I incline to think that recourse to armour would be a mere temporary phase of military science on land, as it seems likely to prove at sea. The chemistry of explosion progresses apparently at least as the square of the progress made by the art of protection; and what I think we must look to is a steady increase, perhaps a very rapid one, in the destructive power of fire-arms, met to a certain extent by fortification and tactics causing battles to be fought at longer and longer ranges, till, as I hope and believe, the rapid development of the efficiency of war shall put an end to war itself."

"God grant it," said Vere. "For certainly if we are to wait until war is superseded by moral influences, we may wait for many an age. Material science of late advances infinitely faster than moral improvement; and if material science has power to put a stop to war, we shall owe it more than for telegraphs, railways, and all the other civil progress of the last century."

"Are you sure," I said, "that the entire cessation of war would be an advantage; at anyrate, that the termination of the miseries it involves and of the occasional indulgence to evil passions it certainly affords, would not be counterbalanced by grave loss to the moral vigour of human nature? However evil war may be, we know that it affords the chief opportunities for the exercise of many of the noblest qualities of humanity, and a chief motive to encourage them; that it was inseparably entwined with that chivalry which is the basis of so many modern virtues and of so much of our social culture. Or, granting that man may one day be too civilized and too highly developed to tolerate the horrors or need the discipline of war, are we not as yet very far indeed from such a state? Is there not much in the political arrangements of the world which only war can alter, and which is so bad that to have it stereotyped by the cessation of war would be worse than war itself? We know too that moral evil of all kinds, as well as physical suffering, is not only permitted by the Almighty, but is apparently an inherent part of the constitution of nature; and some divines, I think, have endeavoured to reconcile this with the perfect goodness of the Creator by arguing that a high degree of moral excellence would be impossible to mankind in the absence either of vice or of misery."

"There is no doubt an element of truth in your seeming paradox," replied Vere. "Unquestionably, with the disappearance of all severe trials of human courage and devotion, with the cessation of physical struggle among men, and with the more and more complete establishment of man's control over natural forces,

there would be, so far as human foresight can extend, some danger of degeneration, at least among the higher and more civilized races; some risk lest the civilized and settled countries of the world should become for the choicest specimens of human nature what tradition tells us that Capua was to the hardy soldiers of Hannibal. Still, war is so terrible a thing,—involves so much fearful suffering, generates such swarms of what I hope it is not unchristian to call human vermin, and is connected with so much of evil passions, less among soldiers themselves than among the statesmen who arm them and the nations who catch the animosities and exaggerate the malice felt by their rulers—that I should be content to purchase perpetual peace by the sacrifice of all the beneficial effects of war.”

“Of course, I know,” said Dalway, “that most orthodox Christian ministers defend war as they defend capital punishment, and excuse certain forms of revenge; but I hardly expected to hear a sort of apology for wholesale murder from a Christian so sincere and so consistent as I know you to be.”

“Consistency in Christianity,” answered Vere, “is perhaps the most rare, I might even say the most absolutely impossible or unknown, of human virtues; and I certainly can lay no claim to it. Not only are there always passions so deeply rooted in our nature, and so entwined with what we at least believe to be good feelings and sacred principles, that we persuade ourselves of their accordance with those Christian precepts which most plainly rebuke them; there are also a multitude of practical considerations, which, to our short-sighted intelligence, appear to limit the

application of the Divine maxims, and render a strict adherence to them dangerous to human welfare, and even irreconcilable with the general spirit and purpose of our Lord's teaching. Unless, in interpreting His Word, we could absolutely divest ourselves of all prejudice and bias arising from such considerations—unless, moreover, we could absolutely resolve to follow what after such unbiassed interpretation we believe to be His meaning, no matter what the obvious and immediate consequences—none of us could pretend even to approach consistency in our faith any more than in our practice. But I have always thought that war is among those apparent contradictions between Christian practice and the teaching of Christ which are most capable of defence by reason. If we are right as Christians in maintaining a police to arrest criminals, or in defending our lives and property or the safety of our families by force, then I think it is hardly possible to maintain that war is necessarily unchristian.”

“Society,” answered Dalway, “could hardly exist without a police; and if it did, the license of self-defence would have to be widely extended both in practice and theory. But society might very well exist without war.”

“Perhaps,” interpolated Cleveland, “but at present war is the police of Europe, and freedom and public law could not exist without it.”

“I suppose,” resumed Dalway, “there never was a war in which each nation did not sincerely believe itself to be in the right; and surely Christians ought to be able to dispense with mutual murder where they have not—

as in the case of legal self-defence—to resist attempted crime, but simply to settle quarrels between parties both of whom would shrink from committing open and obvious wrong. Better submit to such wrong as the conscience of a nation would allow it to inflict, than resort to an arbitrament so utterly at variance with every precept of the faith we profess to hold in common.”

“I am afraid,” replied Cleveland, “that the conscience of nations is very flexible, and cannot be trusted to restrain them from aggressions quite as clearly criminal as those of thieves and burglars. Remember Bismarck’s shameless butchery and robbery in Denmark, and the deliberately planned treachery by which Austria was goaded to the ruin of Sadowa. Or if nations would not collectively engage in such aggressions, chiefs and princes may do so; and once engaged, we know how quickly and certainly every nation persuades itself that its cause is just. No theft, no highway robbery, was ever more grossly criminal, more utterly inexcusable on any principle either of public law or natural right, than the invasion of Silesia by Frederic the Great, or the wars of Napoleon in Germany, Spain, and Russia. Resistance to such outrages seems to me to stand on exactly the same basis with the repression of professional crime.”

“Hardly,” said Dalway, “if only for this reason: that in the one case we punish only the criminal; in the other the punishment falls on thousands, often hundreds of thousands, who have had no practical choice and are morally guiltless of the outrage—let it be as gross, as clearly criminal, as you will—in which

professional duty or national allegiance obliges them to become practical accomplices."

"True!" rejoined Cleveland. "And it would be unchristian and criminal in a high degree to *hate* these involuntary accomplices of a conqueror's guilt, or to inflict upon them anything in the way of vindictive or retributive punishment. But inasmuch as they *are* 'practically accomplices,' we are compelled to treat them as we would treat a burglar's dog or a highwayman's horse, and kill them simply in self-defence."

"Few wars," said Dalway, "are really wars of self-defence. In nine cases out of ten, they are at most waged in defence of some imaginary right or remote interest."

"Of late years," replied Cleveland, "certainly during the last three-quarters of a century, every war has been on one side or the other a war of self-defence; though no doubt the allies of the original belligerent may have interposed not to defend their own immediate safety, but to resist a gross crime or to protect a remote object of their own. But the plea of self-defence avails the allies of a just cause precisely as it avails the police. Those great Powers who interfere to resist a wanton invasion of a weaker State fulfil a recognised historical duty imposed by usage and by principle; acting in very truth as the police of Europe in the noblest sort of self-defence—defence of the common interest of all in putting down and punishing a breach of those laws on which the preservation of the general peace and security depends."

"Your phrase, 'wholesale murder,'" said Vere, addressing himself to Dalway, "expresses and explains

what seems to me the fallacy of those who denounce war as unchristian. If all self-defence by force be unchristian, if the precept to 'resist not evil' be taken literally and observed in face of outrage on person or property by intestine enemies of society, then, and precisely on the same grounds, war is unchristian. And of course all unjust wars, and all wars that might be avoided by the exercise of temper and forbearance, without involving submission to gross wrong and consequent encouragement to worse wrong in future, are thoroughly unchristian. But if any self-defence be permissible to Christians, then I hold that wars of self-defence or police fall necessarily within the possible scope of Christian duty—precisely because war is *not* wholesale murder, because it is not murder in any moral or Christian sense whatsoever. Opinion is averse to call even a duellist who has not given wanton provocation or deliberately sought a quarrel a murderer; but a duellist is much more a murderer than a soldier, or even a prince or government that declares war. The essential guilt of murder, on Christian principles, is less in the act than in the extreme indulgence of the evil passions that lead to it. It is a crime of personal malice carried to the highest degree of wickedness. A soldier bears no personal malice to the enemy, as the treatment of the wounded by civilized nations sufficiently shows. You know yourself that thoroughly sincere Christians, who would regard it as an unpardonable sin to slay or wound a fellow-creature in a duel—and who loyally to the best of their power obey the command implied in the declaration, that he who hateth his brother is a murderer—bear arms with a

conscience at ease. Such soldiers as Lee and Jackson, Lawrence and Havelock, are among the noblest of recent Christian examples. War, at any rate as it is waged among modern nations, does not excite among soldiers those passions whose repression is the essential purport of the precepts to which the Quakers alone give a consistently literal interpretation. Chivalry may be said to have Christianized war itself, except where—as between Russians and Turks—theological hatred, the bitterest of all evil passions, intervenes. True, one can hardly imagine the Saviour looking on with approval while His professed disciples inflict death or agonizing wounds on one another; but I am not sure that our view on this point is not exaggerated or perverted by the difficulty of realizing that essential principle of Christianity which teaches that sin is in the spirit and not in the act. A blow with the fist given in spite and malice may be far more wicked, far more unchristian, than wholesale slaughter inflicted by men who bear no malice to one another; who fight simply from a sense of duty to their sovereign or country, and would be willing heartily to shake hands with their antagonists the moment that the war is over or even that a truce is established. There can hardly be much unchristian temper in the strife of men who, in a pause of conflict, can mingle peaceably to drink at the same stream, or divide provisions or luxuries like brothers and friends.”

“I am more inclined,” answered Dalway, “to agree with the saying, whose author for the moment I forget, that war is wicked in proportion as it is generous and chivalric—that a quarrel involving so little of bitter-

ness as to allow of such interchange of courtesies cannot afford a decent excuse for bloodshed. In short, if war is not always equally abominable, it is justifiable in proportion as the ground of quarrel is deep and serious; it is wicked in proportion as it is wanton; and just in proportion as it is wanton, and therefore wicked, is the element of malice between the combatants eliminated."

"That," answered Cleveland, "has always appeared to me one of the most signal instances of the facility with which literary men above all others are prone to lose sight of the most notorious concrete realities while fixing their attention on a plausible abstraction. Had the writer in question remembered or reflected on the history of modern warfare, he must have seen at once that the bitterness of the quarrel, the sufficiency of its grounds, have nothing to do with the manner in which war is waged. Modern soldiers in the most desperate quarrels—even when fighting like the Confederates of 1861 for national existence—interchange the same courtesies as the knights of the best times of chivalry. And this is mainly due to the fact that the tone has been given, the usages of war settled, by professional soldiers. With them fighting is a matter of simple duty, and they concern themselves very little with the motives that may have induced their Sovereign to order them to fight. Therefore they rarely or never bear malice to their antagonists. If they do, it is not because the quarrel is graver than usual or the provocation more intolerable; but because some alien influence, which has generally little or nothing to do with the quarrel itself, has affected their feelings. Thus, as I just now re-

marked, theological animosity, as well as comparative barbarism, renders wars between Russia and Turkey especially savage; though in each case the grounds of quarrel are generally flimsy. The ferocity of the Peninsular war was due not to the lawlessness of the French invasion, but primarily to the atrocities committed by French soldiers, leading to atrocious retaliation, and next to the fact that masses of non-professional fighting men, not led by trained officers, were engaged on the Spanish side. The employment of negro troops by the North and the outrageous ravages committed in Virginia and South Carolina, might have made the American civil war almost equally savage, but for the great influence of General Lee, and the steady determination shown both by him and by President Davis not to be provoked into a system of reprisals. Practically in modern days professional soldiery affords that guarantee against ferocity in war which in former times was given much less effectually by the usages of chivalry."

"You were speaking," said Vere, presently, "of the possibility of a reversion to old practice as regards the use of armour. We have seen already a return to very ancient usage in naval tactics; the ram promising in greater or less measure to supersede the gun, and revive the old Athenian method of maritime attack. Is it not a little remarkable again that the military powers of the Continent are returning to the old idea under which every citizen was a soldier, and the army consisted of all the men of military age and strength belonging to the nation?"

"Yes," said Cleveland. "Though now-a-days it is

not that the nation becomes from time to time an army, but that the professional army absorbs and trains the entire manhood of the nation. I have grave fears that this practice may bring back something of the ferocity of mediæval warfare. It certainly did so in America. Professional soldiers of our age would hardly have committed the crimes which political animosity impelled the Northern Generals to perpetrate and the Northern Government people and troops to approve. It is true that the Germans, with all their traditional animosity and vindictive memories, did infinitely less mischief and committed far fewer cruelties in France than professional soldiers have generally done; but the Germans are, in nearly all relations (where their merciless system of discipline and the sternly practical temper of the Imperial Government do not interfere), a peculiarly gentle people; intensely domestic also and therefore specially averse to those forms of outrage which infuse more bitterness and ferocity into war than all other military excesses together. I should not like to see a French or even an Italian army, recruited under the present system by the compulsory enlistment of an entire population, encamped in an enemy's country. Obviously civilians in these days, whatever their previous military training, must hate the trade of war; and when dragged into it, will feel bitter resentment against the antagonist who has compelled them to quit their business and families and encounter the perils and hardships of a campaign. Professional soldiers, on the other hand, are rather grateful to those who have given them an opportunity of distinction and promotion. I certainly think, therefore, that the new

military system—necessitated as of course it is by the certainty that success now chiefly depends on numbers and that no moral superiority can stand against great numerical advantage—has a tendency to check those modifications in the usages of warfare which have for centuries proceeded steadily, if slowly, in the direction of humanity and courtesy. In proportion as war is waged by the nations whose national passions are enlisted rather than by professional soldiers with whom fighting is a matter of course and a point of honour, war has at least a tendency to become doubly unchristian; provoking fiercer passions, and waged with more of cruelty and vindictiveness. I therefore agree on the whole with Vere in holding that that abolition of physical conflict towards which I incline to hope that the perfection of the science of destruction is leading us will be, on the whole, a decided gain to the world.”

Here the conversation dropped. Vere left us to commence his daily round of parochial work. Dalway had received business letters by the post, to which his morning was devoted. His wife joined Mrs. Cleveland in the drawing-room; and Cleveland and I started for a long day's walk among the hills.

CHAPTER VII.

GENESIS OF THE STATE.

AT some two miles from home we were joined by a friend with whom Cleveland was intimately acquainted, and who was more slightly known to me—Francis Gerard. Belonging to one of the oldest families of North Western Mercia, his father was nevertheless exceedingly poor, and had with great difficulty given his son a thorough education. His death, just when Francis left college, obliged the young man to seek some practical work as a means of maintaining himself. He might, all his friends thought, have prospered as a tutor at Oxford, where his success if not brilliant had been honourable; and where he had an intellectual reputation much higher than that to which his academic achievements and his position in the final schools could by themselves have entitled him. He had however, to the general surprise, absolutely declined this apparently congenial career, and had entered as a workman in a great engineering establishment. He speedily rose to employments not unworthy of his intellect, and long before he was thirty had, by an exceedingly ingenious invention, won fame in his own line and saw clear and open before him the road to fortune. He married, and was—so Cleveland, who had often visited him, told me

—exceedingly and exceptionally happy in his wife and children. But in one single fortnight an outbreak of scarlet fever which had ravaged the neighbourhood desolated his home, and he was again left alone in the world. Most men of industrious habits, especially if they have been successful in business, incline under such circumstances to devote themselves more earnestly than ever to work, as if to leave themselves no time for thought or memory. Now and then a man is found who really acts in the fashion which poets and novelists, describing life not from experience but from imagination, represent as natural and usual; throwing up all the occupations and interests left to him in life; commonly at the same time renouncing all such consolation as social intercourse could afford in order to break away from scenes that must always recall the past, and from a routine entirely divested of every charm and of all its ennobling or endearing elements. Gerard's invention gave him an ample competence; but, like most men of inventive genius, he had seemed to take great delight in his employment for its own sake; and all who knew him, except Cleveland, were astonished when he threw it up entirely and for ever, and never again attempted to make for himself a settled home or engaged in any regular occupation. A great part of his time was spent in travelling, generally on foot; and he was believed to have visited many strange regions and to have traversed no inconsiderable part of the known world; though, save by the slightest incidental allusions, he seldom if ever referred to his adventures and experiences, and certainly never told any one whence he had come or whither he was bound. That he still

retained any memory of or care for the practical life from which he had withdrawn was shown only in his keen but fitful interest in politics—and even this interest was absolutely theoretical, for he never after his loss took the slightest part in political action, never wrote a letter or a pamphlet, and never addressed a public meeting; receiving with an air of almost contemptuous surprise the suggestions of occasional acquaintances, struck by the evidences of acquired knowledge and popular sympathies his conversation afforded, that he should endeavour to obtain a seat in Parliament. Somehow he contrived throughout the course of his wandering life to keep himself acquainted with all the political movements of England, and generally of other countries. He had early imbibed extreme radical or rather democratic views, not apparently through the influence of his peculiar experiences, but from the indelible impression produced on his mind by purely abstract arguments of that kind with which debating clubs are so familiar, and which ascribe to the vote of a numerical majority the same kind of quasi-divine inalienable validity independent of right or reason, anterior and superior to all law and compact, which a more poetic if not a more reasonable superstition formerly attributed to the will of legitimate princes. Neither of us had known his whereabouts, and the meeting was entirely unexpected. After a few inquiries and answers he turned to me.

"Well," he said, "times and positions have changed since you and I last talked on politics. You hardly expected at that time that your party would ever have looked to the great towns and the manufacturing and home counties for the foundation of their power; nor,

I presume, did you dream of having to support a more democratic measure of reform than any of those you had so consistently and so mercilessly criticised. Nor, for that matter, did I expect that household suffrage and the ballot would have given us a Conservative Ministry and a Tory majority in the House of Commons."

"Is that distinction," I asked, "accidental or intentional?"

"Intentional, certainly," he answered. "Few of the present Ministers can be called Tories, though I am not sure that they deserve any better the title of Conservatives. The majority in the present House of Commons consists in the main of Tories, half-afraid to avow the Tory instincts and prejudices which, nevertheless, give all its remaining vitality to their political creed, and govern their votes whenever their leaders permit them to give effect to their real feelings. I have sat in the gallery four or five times during the important debates of the two last sessions, and nothing amused me more than the palpable contrast between the ideas of your Conservative statesmen and those of your Tory rank and file. The latter listened in cool, almost mortified, silence to the grave practical nineteenth-century reasonings of their chiefs. Now and then they broke into enthusiastic cheering; always at some sentence—much out of keeping with the general tone of Ministerial speeches—which appealed to impracticable and antiquated Tory sentiments; so that more than one Minister whenever he was applauded seemed to start and hesitate, asking himself, like the Athenian

Conservative, 'have I said anything particularly foolish?'"

"That," I said, "seems hardly correct. The favourites of the old Tories among us are Lord S. and Mr. H., and these assuredly are two of the strongest members of the Ministry."

"In a certain sense, yes," answered Gerard. "But the ideas and speeches of the latter are very little in harmony with the general temper of the Cabinet and the tone of its policy. He was too influential to be set aside; but, so far as regards practical English politics, he was shelved by his removal from the department which had the largest share in legislative business to one whose administrative work fully occupied him, but gave him few opportunities of contact with the business of the day, or with the mind of the House of Commons. Never did your strangely-chosen chief show greater cleverness than in thus stranding a dangerous colleague clear of the political current, while seeming rather to promote than degrade him. The other grows daily less and less of a Tory, fortunately for the Premier, who could not have shelved so powerful and self-sustained a leader of men, even in that office with which Parliament has least to do."

"I believe in *him*," I answered, "though I find myself on the whole less in harmony with his views as we both grow older. I remember that on several occasions I have differed from him on questions of practical policy admitting of judgment by results; and in every case I have found *him* ultimately right."

"He is," answered Gerard, "too thoroughly able and clear-headed to remain a Tory, or at least to apply his

Toryism to the practical work of Government at the present day. For the rest; your leader in one House is as perfect a type of the Whig *doctrinaire* as you could well have picked out even among the scions of the great Whig houses. Your leader in the other, if he has any convictions at all, is persuaded that democracy must win, and determined therefore to associate with the winning cause that party of which accident—and the desertion at a critical moment of all its experienced officers—long made him the despot rather than the chosen chief. His Reform Bill must have enlightened and startled you all not a little; and yet you had no right to be surprised. Had you judged his real opinions or ideas, not by those Parliamentary harangues in which he was necessarily the mouthpiece of his followers and colleagues, but by those novels wherein he gave vent to his personal fantasies, you might surely have discerned that if he is before everything a Jew, he is in the next place a democrat with a leaning to Cæsarism. How were you able to forget or overlook his merciless ridicule of the English Peerage, his open declaration that the Tory party is really the democratic party? How could you forget 'Sybil;' which might have been written, except for its unreality and its cleverness, by the Secretary of a Trades Union?"

"There is," I said, "another idea which seems to me, judging by his novels, to have a deeper hold on his mind than his early democratic prejudices: I mean his contempt for the unconstitutional nonsense imported by Whigs and Peelites from France, the ridiculous and un-English theory *que le roi regne et ne*

gouverne pas. He is perhaps the only English statesman since the days of Strafford who could be conceived capable of a royalist *coup d'état*; and this is the only point on which I have ever felt the least sympathy with him."

"Well!" answered Gerard, "is that really your esoteric Tory creed; a secret desire for despotism? I did at least give Tories credit for valuing what they call liberty; that is to say, the political ascendancy of the middle and upper classes, and the maintenance of those ancient institutions which at all events secure Englishmen against arbitrary power, and insure that, however bad the law, at least they shall be governed by known law, and not by the personal will of an hereditary monarch or the arbitrary rules of a bureaucracy."

"I am not," I said, "a representative Tory. But, speaking for myself alone, the idiocy of verdicts has taught me a profound contempt for that palladium of English liberty—trial by jury. So again the retention for a quarter of a century of paramount power by statesmen who have deliberately refused, in the face of vast military establishments on every side, to give England an army, has taught me to dread and despise parliamentary government. The first necessity of a State, the first merit of any form of government, is effective provision for the national safety and honour; and a despotism that will make this provision—which all despotisms invariably regard as their primary purpose—is, I think, infinitely preferable to the best conceivable constitutional polity which results in leaving the richest and most envied Power in the world

without anything that can be now-a-days called an army, and not unfrequently with a navy scarcely equal to that of any two of her possible antagonists.

"The recent experiences of France," replied Gerard ironically, "certainly tell in favour of your theory! The Third Empire provided admirably for the military security and strength of what had been the first of military Powers! I should have thought that Metz and Sedan, the utter rottenness of the military administration, the thorough demoralization of the soldiery and officers, might have cured even an Imperialist of all faith in the vigour and efficiency of despotism."

"The vice of Napoleonism," replied Cleveland, "was corruption; and corruption inhered not in the despotism, but in its illegitimacy—in the fact that the vast majority of the natural aristocracy and of the intellectual classes of France regarded the Emperor as an usurper, and refused to serve him; so that he was thrown back on the sole support of his hereditary partisans and of those whose aid he could purchase. Knowing that his throne or at least his dynasty rested in the last resort on a party and not on the nation, that he was the elect of the peasantry and the Bourse and held even the faith of the army by an uncertain tenure, he was compelled to be not simply and distinctly the chief of the nation but before all else and of primary necessity the leader of the Imperialist faction. As the leader of a faction, he was compelled to purchase support by winking at the malpractices of friends and adherents with whom he could not dispense, and to choose his advisers only among those whose adhesion was blind or mercenary."

"But," rejoined Gerard, "such must always be the position of any Government not democratic; at least among an enlightened people. It must always have the numerical majority whom it excludes from power against it, and must purchase the support of the minority either by class legislation or by partial benefits granted at the expense of the nation."

"Observe," answered Cleveland, "that the experience of 1870 has two sides. The success of Germany answers conclusively the inferences you would draw from the defeat of France. Prussia had indeed a Parliament and a constitution. But had Parliament been supreme, as in England, Prussia would have had no army capable of coping with those of Austria and France. It was because in military matters the Government was virtually despotic—because the King and Bismarck were able to carry out their military policy even in its financial aspect by unsparing use of prerogative in the teeth of Parliament—that Prussia was able when the hour struck to absorb Germany; and then use Germany to crush France. If under abnormal conditions France owed her military rottenness to Imperialism, Imperialism made that German army which parliamentary government would have diminished and demoralized. It is to the despotic elements of the Prussian Government that Prussia owes the hegemony of Germany, and Germany the first place in Europe."

"Of course," rejoined Gerard, "ambitious princes like those of the House of Hohenzollern are willing to sacrifice to military ascendancy the welfare of the people; while the representatives of those millions

who have to bear the sacrifice may well think that the game is not worth the candle. But the argument tells entirely against Autocracy; the truth being that the despot only considers one side of the question, while a free nation balances one against the other with due care, even if it err now and then in its estimate of the comparative value of martial power and of freedom from oppressive pecuniary and personal taxation. The hatefulness of that which French Radicalism so aptly called 'the tax of blood,' must in itself tend to keep nations whose armies are recruited by conscription at peace so long as they control their own affairs; and the peace of Europe, therefore, would be comparatively stable if there were none but constitutional governments to account with."

"I think that when confronted with actual facts, you will find yourself wholly mistaken," replied Cleveland. "Putting aside the peculiarities of race—Teutonic nations, for example, never much loving war for its own sake, and preferring security and honour to that glory which inflames the imagination of Latin and Celtic peoples—republics and constitutional monarchies are just as ready to fight on flimsy pretexts as are the most ambitious princes. Perhaps I should make an exception against usurpers. They know that nothing but martial triumphs can give them a secure seat on their throne; but hereditary sovereigns have been on the whole, and are now, at least as pacific as democracies."

"Compare," retorted Gerard, "Frederic the Second and the United States; the invasion of Silesia and the peace of Canada."

"The comparison is no such contrast as you would have it," replied Cleveland. "The United States have twice—under threat of war, and by diplomatic chicaneries from which regard for personal honour would have deterred any prince who was or wished to be thought a gentleman,—robbed us of territories larger than Silesia. I will not raise the Mexican question, because you would say that the war with Mexico was the war of the slave-owning aristocracy of the South. But remember that the United States have committed piracy against Canada on several occasions, and that, since the pirates were never punished, the entire nation must be held accessory to their guilt. Remember, too, the piratical propagandism of the first French Republic."

"The Republicans," said Gerard, "did not attack their neighbours till their neighbours had attacked them. Aggression began on the side of the princes."

"In form, yes," said Cleveland, "in fact, no. The French Revolutionists had sent spies and intriguers to stir up revolt beyond the frontier before a single foreign soldier had crossed it; and any punishment inflicted on the employers of such political incendiaries would have been justified alike by common sense and by public law. But since it is not likely that either constitutional or despotic governments will leave off fighting so long as war is not rendered morally impossible by its destructiveness, the first duty of every government, the first necessity of national policy, is military strength. The ridiculous inadequacy of the military force of England to her rank in Europe and her transmarine interests is notorious to every soldier

here and to every statesman abroad. I do not for a moment believe that our Liberal leaders are so ignorant or so imbecile as not to know that we are dangerously defenceless. They are, then, guilty of deliberately endangering their country's safety in pursuit of a paltry economy, or of the popularity to be gained thereby."

"You can hardly suspect them all of such dishonesty," said Gerard. "At worst, the great advocates of pacific policy and diminished armaments wish to keep down our forces lest the consciousness of strength should tempt the country into war."

"Grant that," said Cleveland, "and their case is little better. If so, they are cheating the country into the adoption of a policy which if openly avowed would be indignantly repudiated; and in order to paralyze strength which might be used for purposes they personally dislike, they are consciously exposing England to invasion, dishonour, and not improbable ruin. This is surely what our grandfathers would have plainly called high treason of the worst sort; and the traitors deserve hanging at least as well as any rebel that ever died on the scaffold."

"Perhaps so," answered Gerard. "I don't know that, considering what governments generally are, rebellion is commonly a crime; and I have no interest in upholding the character or the policy of those who now-a-days call themselves Liberals."

"But," said Cleveland, "do you not see how the confessed military and naval weakness of England shames the House of Commons and constitutional government itself? All the reforms of a hundred

years are not worth one month of invasion. A Government which would have given us neither Catholic emancipation nor reform nor free trade nor the ballot nor education, but would have made invasion impossible and maintained England effectively in that rank as a great Power, her traditional claims to which have long been laughed at by all the statesmen of Europe—would have been incomparably better than one which, allowing it all possible credit for its domestic legislation, has exposed us at any moment during the last fifty years to see an enemy's army, outnumbering threefold the forces we could muster, landed on the coast of Kent or Sussex."

"The experience of the United States," replied Gerard, "shows that a democratic nation can wage war with magnificent vigour and efficiency, though perhaps at a very extravagant cost. And surely invasion itself is hardly worse than that insecurity of life, personal liberty, and property which is inseparable from autocratic government. No man can be secure for a moment when a despotic sovereign may at his pleasure or caprice transport or hang any suspected subject, and confiscate his estates."

"The Czar is the only monarch who could do so, save in time of revolution," said Cleveland. "And practically we know that the enormous majority of any people feel quite as safe from arbitrary injustice (if not from bureaucratic vexations) under an European autocrat as under an American democracy. I doubt, again, if you can find a single case of lawless tyranny in Russia or Austria comparable to the confiscation of the Van Ranselaer estates by New York juries and

mobs. I doubt if in any European country during the last fifty years there has occurred a violation of law under political pretexts so shameless as the arbitrary confiscation of the Arlington property, belonging not to General Lee himself but to his wife, by the administration of Abraham Lincoln, the ideal hero of English democrats; in the teeth of a positive and peremptory provision of the constitution declaring that even a legal conviction for high treason shall not work forfeiture except during the life of the offender."

"But," rejoined Gerard, "what have you to say of the 2d December 1851, and the cruel proscription and wanton street massacre that followed?"

"I think," replied Cleveland, "that, in the first place, the *Coup-d'Etat* with all its consequences was incomparably less cruel, even as regards its individual victims, than the Reign of Terror or the crimes of the previous anarchy, with which alone as an act of revolutionary violence it can be considered in anywise parallel. Napoleon the Third at least did not butcher aged men, women, young girls, and children by wholesale in cold blood. The street massacre of the 4th December was an outbreak of panic ferocity among the troops. I think moreover that—apart from such mistakes as are inseparable from violent revolutions—the victims who were intentionally sacrificed for the most part richly deserved their fate. They were with few exceptions Red Republicans or Socialists. Republicans, they were accomplices in that great treason against all Republican principle, against the fundamental doctrine of democracy, by which the mob of Paris and its adherents in other French cities forced the

Republic of 1848 upon France against the will of almost the whole of the educated classes and of three-fourths of the entire nation. I think that to shoot or hang political Socialists or professed 'Reds' must always be justifiable if expedient. They are engaged in a permanent conspiracy to destroy existing order and to plunder all actual owners of property. If an active attempt were made to carry out their schemes, no man of sense and spirit would hesitate to suppress it if necessary by fire and sword, by grape and shell, as the Commune was crushed in 1871. If then at any moment the Socialists are becoming so formidable as to render an attempt to carry their theories into action at all probable, it is a duty to repress them by any necessary severity as we would put down any other sort of thieves. Motives are of little consequence in a question of practical policy. We do not imprison thieves or hang murderers primarily because they are wicked, but because they are dangerous; and if Socialists are more dangerous—as at certain times they are, and as in France in 1851 they were generally believed to be—than ordinary criminals, it is a duty to deal with them just as promptly and with efficient severity. And he who does it needs no other warrant than the fundamental principle of all government—*salus populi summa lex*; and no other acquittal than the formal or informal approval of the State he has saved."

"I do not understand you," said Gerard, somewhat sharply, "to assert that Socialism is a crime, though you would deal with Socialists as the worst of criminals. But admitting that the governing part of society has a right to crush its enemies—which, considering the

foundation and character of most governments, is a very liberal admission—granting also that the so-called State is not bound to wait for open assault but may choose its own time for attacking those who are preparing an attack upon it—Socialists are not necessarily revolutionists. Many, I think by far the most of them, aim only at moral revolution; hope to carry their theories into action not by force of arms but by convincing their fellow-citizens and obtaining a majority in the legislature. Surely such intentions cannot constitute them criminals or give their political opponents any right to suppress their doctrines by violence?”

“Why not?” replied Cleveland. “Of course I speak of the Socialism of to-day, which (except in England) is a political conspiracy, a scheme to seize on the power of the State and thereby to confiscate property; not of that which in the last generation simply endeavoured to work out its own experiments with its own resources, and in so doing learnt and taught some valuable lessons. The freedom allowed to those experiments here and in the United States has discredited Socialism with Englishmen and native Americans; but modern Socialism does not experiment, does not sacrifice its own resources to create new forms of society. Its idea is to steal the wealth that belongs to others; and this, whether carried out by force or fraud, by ballot or bullet, is an idea essentially criminal. Suppose the majority of the populace of our great cities to be bent on plundering the owners of land or of capital. This I presume is morally an intention to commit robbery; and as such may properly be defeated by any necessary severity. What moral difference does

it make whether the majority who have nothing rob me by force, or whether, electing a majority of the legislature, they plunder me by Act of Parliament?"

"Property," replied Gerard, "exists by law and is the creation of the State. What the State has given the State may take away. The regulations it has made it may alter; and resistance to its decrees in favour of Communism would be just as criminal as resistance to the laws which at present protect individual property."

"The State," rejoined Cleveland, "certainly did not create property. It would be far more correct to say that property and the family created society and the State."

"At any rate," replied Gerard, "the law regulates the descent of property, and might if it chose take from the individual all right to control his property after his own death; might in fact confiscate all but such as a man has himself acquired, or received by gift *inter vivos*; and this would suffice in two generations to abolish individual property and establish Communism."

"On that point," answered Cleveland, "you are in accord with the democratic economists, who would nevertheless tell you that the State has no right to confiscate property in living hands without full compensation. But in reason and in fact inheritance is an inseparable incident of private property, and is, like property, older than the State. It is, in one word, coëval with the family. *Freedom* of bequest is the creation of law; but in the absence of law on the subject, or in the presence of law hostile to inheritance, the head of the family would obviously share it with

his children while he lived, and consequently nothing but confiscation during his life—nothing, that is, but barefaced robbery—could put an end to inheritance. I would ask you, however, putting aside these subtle theories and these references to the origin of social institutions, what right a majority as such have to take away the property of the minority? Take an apt illustration from a well-known political theorist. Suppose a thousand Scotch and a thousand Irish families form a colony on an island, say in the South Pacific. Each family has assigned to it at first an equal portion of the land. The Scots work hard and grow rich; marry late and have few children. The Irish are idle, thriftless, and reckless; squander their property and multiply like rabbits. At the end of a hundred years five-sixths of the population are Irish, and hold one-sixth of the wealth of the community. How can the mere fact that it is a large majority give to this *proletariate*—whose numbers and poverty are the proof and the fruit of its self-indulgence—any right either to control the policy of the community, or to meddle with the property accumulated by the thrift and self-denial, the industry and prudence of that minority whose wealth and weakness in numbers are alike the result and the evidence of its self-denial and intellectual vigour?”

“Leaving out of account,” replied Gerard, “the question whether slow multiplication be meritorious, I do not see that the situation and relation of classes or races some scores of years ago can affect the rights of the existing generation, or upset the inherent title of the majority to govern. But even admitting that in the special case you put the minority might at least

claim an absolute and indefeasible title to their property, you must be fully aware that your supposed case does not represent the reality. Is it in any sense or in any considerable degree true that in any existing society the proletariat are poor by their own fault or default, and the rich wealthy by their own merit?"

"In the main, yes," returned Cleveland. "Of course no one would affirm that individuals are necessarily or even perhaps generally rich or poor by their own merit or default. But taking rich and poor as classes, and looking not to one generation but over the whole period of the national life, I think it may fairly be affirmed that the poverty of the multitude is due chiefly to recklessness in early marriage and systematic unthrift; and the wealth of the few due mainly to good service, economy, and self-denial."

"How in the world can you make that out?" asked Gerard. "Surely we know that the foundation of property in land was plunder more or less recent; and that the great majority of the poor have not for generations had a fair chance of raising themselves?"

"The last extensive and permanent transfer of property by force in England," replied Cleveland, "took place nearly three hundred years ago. The last confiscation on a large scale in Ireland occurred during the desperate death-struggle caused by the English Revolution, and since that time nearly two centuries have elapsed. Probably not one-half of the land is in the hands of the families which held it immediately after those convulsions, their heirs or devisees. Probably seven-eighths of the soil, both of Ireland and England, is now held by the representatives either of

owners who held it before these revolutions, or of men who have since acquired it by purchase. You know however that title by prescription is an essential principle of justice common to all law, is in fact the original and oldest of all legal titles; and that, no matter what the method in which estates may have been first acquired, the present owner's right, moral and political, is in no wise affected by transactions which took place some scores or hundreds of years before he was born. The extent of political confiscations is always monstrously exaggerated. The largest that these kingdoms have seen were probably those of the ecclesiastical estates under Henry VIII.—which must be judged on grounds entirely distinct from those on which ordinary forfeitures for treason rest—and those which took place in Ireland during the prolonged conflict or conquest that continued, with intervals of truce, from the accession of Elizabeth to the surrender of Limerick. I doubt, as I have said, whether the actual owners of any very large proportion of the soil be the representatives of men who profited by those confiscations. Even among those who are, a great majority have largely improved the value of their estates. One might be certainly within the mark in saying that by far the greater part of the land is held by the representatives of families whose title is independent of forfeiture, or has been acquired by *bonâ fide* purchase under an implied or explicit State guarantee; and that a still larger proportion of its present value is by natural right and reason the property because the creation of the present holders or their direct predecessors. But the land is only a part

and not the largest part of the public wealth. Nearly all movable property has been acquired honestly by services commercial, industrial, social or political; and increased by prudence energy and self-denial. Very little indeed of our wealth, probably not one hundredth part of it, even including the present value of the soil, would ever have existed but for 'the magic of property;' the savings labour and intelligence of owners bestowed upon it in reliance upon the good faith of the State, and in the certainty of its permanent enjoyment by their descendants. The mere fact that a fraction of such property is held by titles originally bad can in no wise vitiate the justice and sanctity of property in general. Nor do I suppose that you will condescend to argue that original defects of title merely moral can impair the right of *bona fide* purchasers who invested their money under a virtual guarantee from the State, however questionable the right to give such a guarantee may in the first instance have been."

"No," rejoined Gerard. "I grant that if an estate were originally stolen—as the estates of the monasteries were stolen, not so much from the Church as from the people—and if, after being enjoyed under a legal guarantee or merely by prescription for forty or fifty years, it was purchased for value, the purchaser's title is morally just as good as his right to the money he laid out. But you must remember that the wealth you affirm to have been in such large proportion fairly accumulated has for the most part been created by the labour of others than those who enjoyed it; that its rapid growth in the hands of the employing and trading classes is due to the system of distribution which

prevails under existing social institutions; and that system I consider radically iniquitous and unfair."

"Observe," answered Cleveland, "that, whether fair or not, the distribution of produce between labour and capital is a matter of contract. The labourer agrees to take certain fixed wages, as economists say, 'in lieu of an uncertain and fluctuating share of the profits;' really, as representing the highest value his services bear in the market; and having done so, he has no claim whatever, either on that 'joint produce of which he has received his portion by anticipation,' or on any other part of his employer's wealth. Nor can he or his class claim any interest in that wealth their title to share in which they deliberately and voluntarily sold for value."

"But," rejoined Gerard, "I contend that the contract was not free or fair, being made under compulsion. The unjust distribution of wealth already prevailing compelled the poor to take from the rich such terms as they could get, not such as might be abstractly just."

"That would not," said Cleveland, "affect the right of the individual capitalist to the benefits of the contract. He was not responsible for the poverty of the workmen who asked him for employment. But, further, I think it would not be difficult to show that capital receives less than its natural share even under existing arrangements, and in free countries always does so. What is the rightful share of each partner in a common produce, surely is that, if it can be ascertained, which he has contributed."

"Certainly," said Gerard: "but it never can be

ascertained what share capital and labour have respectively contributed; since neither could do without the other. But as a matter of fact labour could produce something without capital, while capital could produce nothing without labour. Therefore labour ought to profit more largely than capital; seeing that it is the more necessary and the more independent of the two copartners in production."

"I wish," rejoined Cleveland, "you had been with us when very recently we discussed this point. Suppose you are a fisherman able to catch ten fish daily. I offer to lend you a net of my own making which will catch two hundred. If I give you twenty you get ten more than you could catch for yourself; ten which are due to my net. Have I not then a fair right to the other hundred and eighty? And this, or something like it, is as you know the relative position of labour and capital; only that the wages of labour have been not doubled but quintupled at least by the aid of capital and invention."

This puzzled Gerard, and he was silent for a minute. Then he said, "At anyrate I don't see how you can charge the poverty of that great majority of Englishmen whom you call the proletariat upon their own fault."

"Calculate," replied Cleveland, "the wages of the higher classes of our artisans. They could live as single men in vigour and health on less than one-third of their earnings at the age of eighteen. Suppose that, like most educated men without fortune who wish to rise, they laid by all they could spare, and did not marry till thirty. There is scarcely a single artisan in

any of the skilled trades who could not on such conditions start at thirty as his own employer and the employer of others; or who, were he for the rest of his life to act in the same spirit, would not at sixty be a rich man. If, then, few of them have any property, it is because they will not practise the virtues, or, if you prefer it, make the sacrifices by which with scarcely an exception all wealth but land has been originally acquired by the families that now own it—and most of the land also. If, again, the proletariat would as a class lay by two-thirds of what they spend in drink, thirty years would place them as a class in a position of independence almost comparable to that of American or Australian farmers, and their health comfort and character would be improved by the sacrifice. They could if they chose gain property without giving up any good thing for it. How then can you deny that their poverty—by which I mean not the necessity to labour but the absence of property, the inability to live for a few weeks without work, and the danger of pauperism in old age—is due to their own default, as the wealth of the rich is due to their own or their fathers' foresight and self-denial?"

"I have," rejoined Gerard, "preached that truth to them far too often to deny it now. Yet it would be easy to show that comparatively few educated men really make the kind of sacrifice you would demand from the uneducated. The pleasures of the latter are poor in quality and number, and your theory requires that they should for the best years of their lives forego them all. But the artisans of whom you

speakers constitute a small minority of the proletariat. What of the unskilled labourer, and the peasant earning from ten shillings to eighteen shillings a week? What possible chance have these—what chance have they had since serfdom and villeinage were abolished—of saving or rising?"

"Why have they not?" said Cleveland. "Why are their wages so low? Because they marry at the earliest possible age, and have done so for generations, without the least regard to their own interests or the welfare of their children; 'multiplying' without the conscience or the courage to 'replenish the earth.' Engaged in occupations in which capital increases slowly, their numbers, through this inveterate habit of marrying without provision for the future or prudence in the present, increase as rapidly as in employments where multiplication has as yet failed to keep pace with the progress of accumulation and invention."

"It is not necessary or convenient," replied Gerard, "to complicate our debate by entering on the theory of population. It is not necessary for the vindication of the peasantry to argue whether restraint and late marriage be duties. Whether they be so or not, the English and Irish peasantry have till within our own memory been taught the exact reverse of Mill's doctrine. The parson and the squire have—I will grant not for the selfish interest they have in it, but for reasons whose fallacy, as Mill would call it, they might have discerned had their interests lain the other way—encouraged early marriages and rapid multiplication; and encouraged them, not only by precept up to the present day but by practical reward of the most direct and

telling kind, till within the last forty years. The old Poor Law, with its extra allowance for every child, is a complete answer to your attempt to throw on the peasantry the blame of their present poverty."

"Granted," returned Cleveland. "I said that they suffered by their own fault or 'default,' not by their own sin. Nor will I presume to impute moral blame to any class of the poor in respect of the errors that have kept them poor. On the contrary, I entertain the very highest respect for those few individuals who—despite the influences that have led their fellows astray—have by thrift and self-denial raised themselves from the ranks, or, remaining in the ranks, accumulated the means of comfort and independence. I may remind you that even a peasant, if he would remain temperate and unmarried for a few years, might emigrate to Australia in the vigour of youth, and might there raise himself easily to competence if not to wealth. My object, however, was only to prove that the present distribution of wealth is not on the whole the fruit of unjust social and political legislation, but of just and natural laws; and in proving this we have digressed for some time from the main purpose with which I borrowed the illustration of the 'island colony.' My main aim in citing that example was to prove to you by an extreme instance that the mere preponderance of numbers does not give the right to rule, and that even when the majority vote is supreme and sovereign, its rights over property are no more extensive than those of an autocrat or an oligarchy. The 'omnipotence of Parliament,' whether bestowed by a narrow minority or by universal suffrage, is but veiled brute force, con-

veying no sort of moral privilege; no 'right divine to govern wrong.' A confiscatory clause like that of Mr. Gladstone, misappropriating the landlord's property to the unimproving tenant, is theft, as the great Irish Act of Attainder of James II. was murder, none the less because committed under the forms of law. Either would justify resistance, if resistance could hope to prevail; and the theft of yesterday merits, on any ground of moral right or logical justice, punishment hardly less severe than that which overtook the Irish legislators of 1689-90. Property and life are rights antecedent to law; and Englishmen are no more bound to submit unresistingly to be robbed or murdered by Act of Parliament than to endure the same wrongs from the direct violence of the populace which now elects a majority of the House of Commons. But to come back to the main issue, you seem to think that even in the extreme case of the supposed colony, where the proletariat are more numerous precisely because they are less prudent and careful, numbers should prevail over intelligence and over those interests, so liable to injury by legislation, so exposed to unjust taxation by and for the proletariat, which wealth gives to the wealthy. You would admit, I suppose, that in a Joint-Stock Company votes should be proportionate to shares, not to the numbers of the shareholders. Society is a Joint-Stock Company of the widest and most general nature possible. I grant that many of the interests of its members are independent of wealth; and that in some respects, though practically in very few, the poorest is as deeply concerned in the common welfare as the richest. But there are a great number of social matters in which

men are interested in proportion to their riches. How, then, can it be *just* that in regard to these interests (as on all other points) numbers should prevail, and wealth should have no weight? Or how can it be expedient that the ignorant many should overrule the judgment of the intelligent few? At least I think that if you mean to maintain any inherent and essential right in the majority to rule, the burden of proof lies with you; and as yet I never heard Radicals attempt to prove the doctrine which in one form or another lies at the root of all their theories and schemes; and the fallacy of which would falsify their whole political creed."

"So far," rejoined Gerard, "as my knowledge and experience of political philosophical and theological creeds goes, the foundation, the essential principle, is always assumed and not proved. Whenever I have heard a theorist—driven into a corner by an opponent who denied his first principles—attempt to demonstrate them, the argument has seemed to me utterly irrelevant and futile on both sides. Not being able to find any ground in common, any principle admitted by both, the disputants have gone on from one irrelevant or unproven assertion to another, and have generally ended by losing their temper before either has really touched for one moment any vital point in the system of the adversary. However, I know that you will not lose your temper in any argument; I sometimes doubt whether you are so clearly convinced of any truth, so earnestly attached to any opinion or idea, as to get angry on its behalf. I, for my part, have so profound a belief in my fundamental principle that I never felt inclined to do worse than pity the blindness of those

who deny it, as if they denied the existence of the sun. No doubt pity, intellectual or theological, is about the most irritating attitude an opponent can assume, and I will endeavour at any rate not to obtrude it. My difficulty in trying to demonstrate the right of a majority to rule is aptly illustrated by the French proverb—*on ne cherche pas à prouver la lumière*. But surely, to be serious, actual legal distinctions apart, going back to the origin of society, one man has as good a right to influence the determination of public questions as another. Each voice must, in the absence of previously established distinctions, be counted as equal; and, if so, a hundred and one voices must necessarily prevail over ninety-nine.”

“Historically,” replied Cleveland, “society is not founded in that way. It begins with the family; and at most your ideal constituency of equal voters would consist only of heads of households each representing his family and servants. Now suppose one man to have six stout sons and a dozen stalwart and attached slaves. In labour and in battle, in everything whereon depend the security and welfare of the society, he contributes nineteen times as much as his neighbour who has neither children nor servants. On what ground of reason or natural right is he to have no more influence than the other in determining the action to which he gives so much more effect, and in which on the whole he is much more deeply interested, seeing that he has so much more to lose?”

“Of course,” answered Gerard, “in speaking of the origin of society I was thinking not of its historical formation but of the principles on which it would be

constructed by free men able to act as they please. Do you not see that the power of the wealthier patriarch, on which you rest his claim to superior influence in the community, is of itself an outrage on natural justice? By what right does he hold slaves, or command the allegiance of grown-up sons—for of course only grown-up sons would contribute seriously to the strength or wealth of the community they enter?"

"Don't *you* see," rejoined Cleveland, "that in such a state of things as we contemplate, preceding the construction of a society capable of supporting domestic authority by positive law, that authority must rest upon free consent no matter how obtained? The patriarch's slaves, no matter how they became such, remain such by their own choice. Were they to revolt, he could hardly coerce them. Did they choose to run away, he could not possibly reclaim and recover them. So with his sons. Did they think it worth while to leave him—of course forfeiting thereby their right to the property accumulated and protected by the common exertions of the family—they could assert their liberty."

"But," said Gerard, "I should contend that these were entitled to be voters, and their votes would, if your assumptions be correct, be given as their chief directed, and would, therefore, secure to him his rightful influence in the community. No democrat ever objected to the superior influence exercised in virtue of natural ties, of eloquence, of gratitude, or of any form of persuasion."

"Well then," rejoined Cleveland, "take the case of wealth and personal superiority alone. In a rude

community the chief who is gifted with remarkable physical force and skill in the use of weapons probably contributes more to victory in battle, and to the visible power which deters attack, than a dozen inferior men. The early poetry of all nations clearly illustrates this fact. Whether in Homeric poems, Scandinavian sagas, or English ballads, the battle depends rather on the courage and example of the heroes than on the conduct of their followers. Again, the wealth of such a chief may add enormously to the resources of the community he joins. He has horses, and can form a cavalry. He has cattle and sheep, and can secure the tribe from starvation when hunting fails. He has weapons for the chase and war, which double the power of the tribe both to obtain food and to beat off their enemies. Why is he to have no more influence in the action of the community than one who does not render to it a tithe of the service he performs?"

"Wealth," said Gerard, "always has exercised, and I suppose always will, in the most democratic societies, an influence of its own. It is not necessary to enhance that influence by giving to wealth, besides its natural and inevitable weight, an artificial advantage in the shape of additional votes."

"Is it not," said Cleveland, "one of the chief objects of democrats like yourself to destroy that natural influence of wealth? Is not the ballot an essential part of your theories and schemes? And is not the avowed object of the ballot the destruction of this natural influence of wealth; and to a great extent the exclusion of all other influences (save that of eloquence and mob flattery), which give to individuals or to

classes, in right of special qualifications, special weight in political decisions."

"I have always," replied Gerard, "considered the ballot as at best a necessary evil. In a sound state of society no man should shrink from avowing his opinion, as no other man would be allowed to annoy or injure him for entertaining it. Political influence, moreover, even that of a simple vote, is a trust as well as a right. The voter is not entitled to do as he pleases with his suffrage. He may not sell it; he must not give it from corrupt or sinister motives. It is therefore desirable that his vote should be open, so that he may be ashamed of misusing it. The only excuse for the ballot—an excuse which, I fear, is in the actual state of modern society more than sufficient—is that on the whole secret votes are far less likely to be given from improper motives than open ones; that there is infinitely greater danger of coercion or bribery in open voting than of selfish and dishonest motives operating on secret votes which would be corrected by the influence of shame had the vote to be given openly."

"If," answered Cleveland, "the vote is a trust, I do not see how it can be a right. If, which seems to me absolutely clear and undeniable, every franchise or public privilege is a power entrusted to the individual not for the sole protection of his individual interests, but primarily for the benefit of the community at large, it is surely obvious that no man should be entrusted with that privilege who either cannot or will not exercise it for the common benefit. If he be ignorant or foolish, he is not fit to be trusted with

power over the fortunes of his fellow-citizens. If he be, either from character or from circumstances, likely to be governed by selfish and sinister motives, he is equally unfit to enjoy a power which can only be rightfully exercised when it is used for the common weal. Again, the control chiefly to be apprehended from opinion in a democratic society is likely to be exerted in the wrong direction. The one powerful check on open voting will be the feeling of the voter's own class: and in proportion as that class is silly and selfish, brutal and tyrannical, will its honester and wiser members be deterred from voting in the interest of the community at large. The tendency would be to prevent the coalition of the wiser minority of the Many with the thoughtful and educated Few; and to render politics a war of "solid" classes embittered by isolation and mutual antagonism, rather than a gradual development of those opinions which, being shared by the best elements of every class, are probably right and are certainly national. Meanwhile, I would remind you that you have left open, as if you had never clearly made up your mind about it, the question whether wealth does or does not give its possessors a fair title to greater influence of some kind or another in the action of the community to whose general welfare it contributes; whether the necessity of extra protection, the existence of separate interests rightfully entitled to regard from the State, should or should not be recognized; as they are recognized in all other associations in which greater wealth does (to a greater or less degree than in politics) confer a deeper interest in the common object. This omission,

or confusion, or uncertainty, is I think common to all the democratic arguments that I have ever heard or read."

"For the present," replied Gerard, "I will only say that wealth seems to me sure under all forms of social organization to enjoy more than its fair share of influence, be that what it may; and more than just or necessary protection."

"Remember," interposed Cleveland, "the case of the Van Ranselaer estates, and the many instances in which colonial proprietors have been grossly wronged or simply plundered by Legislatures in which the weight of the opinion of the land-owning classes was *nil*, and the tenantry and labourers exercised overwhelming preponderance. Can you say that wealth was sufficiently protected there?"

"Frankly," rejoined Gerard, "I am not familiar with the cases to which you refer, and of course their weight and bearing depend upon the details of each particular instance. I should, however, find it hard to believe that any civilized community at the present day had consciously consented to any invasion of the rights of property. As to qualification for the franchise; the interests to be regarded are of two kinds, those of the State collectively, and those of individuals or classes—those common to all, though different men and different orders may take conflicting views of them; and those which are at least superficially antagonistic to one another. In regard to the first there might be reasons at least conceivable why the suffrage should be confined to persons possessing an intellectual qualification; but even here I can conceive no reason why a wealthy

man of average intelligence should possess more influence than a poor man of superior ability. But a very considerable part of the work of legislation concerns the conflicting interests of individuals and of classes. Now I cannot see how justice is to be done to these if we allow of any qualification or limitation of the franchise. Sinister and selfish motives are just as common, I believe much more common, with an aristocracy or a plutocracy than among the people at large. If you deprive the Many of the suffrage, or allow them to be overridden by peculiar political privileges granted to the Few, you inevitably incur the worst kind of class legislation; that by which the happiness of thousands is sacrificed to the selfishness of scores or units."

"That argument," answered Cleveland, "surely tells directly against universal or extensive suffrage. In order to prevent class legislation it seems in your own view desirable or necessary that no class should possess a monopoly of power, or even such a preponderance as enables it to override the rest of the community. But universal or extensive suffrage gives an absolute irresistible preponderance of power to a single class—and that class the most ignorant of all, and moreover the least capable of seeing how closely its interests are bound up with those of others. The strangest of all methods professing to aim at the prevention of class legislation is to entrust absolute power to a single class; especially where, as in England, and in most old countries, that class is actually prone to regard itself as 'the people,' and likely to believe not only that it has a distinct and separate interest to be secured by wrong-

ing if not by ruining all other classes of the community, but that its interests are alone entitled to consideration."

"I don't think," rejoined Gerard, "that there is the least foundation for the charge you insinuate against the manual workers as a body. In the first place, they are not a single class. They are divided by lines as marked as those which separate the landowner from the trader, the farmer from the landlord, the capitalist from the workman. The interests of the skilled and unskilled artisans are so distinct that they are not infrequently at feud; and the interests of the peasant and the city operative are as different and as liable to be brought into angry opposition as those of the agricultural and commercial middle classes."

"I think," said Cleveland, "that you exaggerate greatly the distinction of interests among the labourers, and still more their consciousness of such distinction. The feuds of which you speak are rare, and never comparable in bitterness, extent, or duration to the feud waged by the Unions of all classes of labourers against the capitalists. But granting all you say, the labourers are for the purpose of our argument a single class in a political sense. They are a class without property, dependent on wages, as against the owners of property and payers of wages. Their political interests, or what they always fancy to be such, are those of a class. It is their interest, or they suppose so, to throw all taxation on realized wealth, and, having done so, to increase as far as possible the public expenditure, especially in all methods which lead to increased employment of labour—in one word, to contribute

nothing to the revenue but to take the largest possible sum from other classes that it may be spent on themselves. It is their interest, or they suppose so, to legislate against the accumulation of wealth in individual hands, to enforce a minimum of wages and a maximum—a very low maximum—of manual toil; in short, to rule every possible question against the accumulative productive power of the past which we call capital, in favour of the immediate temporary producing power of the present distinguished as labour.”

“Some,” said Gerard, “of the steps you expect the working-classes to take would not, in my opinion, be fitly characterized as class legislation, except in so far as they would reverse in favour of the Many the class legislation of ages in favour of the Few. I think the English working-men of this generation are too intelligent, and too well aware of the value to them of accumulated wealth, to strike any serious blow at the security of property.”

CHAPTER VIII.

DEMOS TYRANT.

A PAUSE of some minutes ensued, while we rested on a rough unmortared wall, absorbed in looking down on one of the loveliest views of Rydal Water. Then relighting his pipe, Cleveland spoke.

“It is rash to rest the right of the Many on the fitness of their component units. By necessity they are always the *less* fit to rule, if education be worth any thing at all. Taken *en masse*, the orders which have enjoyed the longest hereditary culture must have the best developed brains; and those which have enjoyed the most leisure will have the highest personal and hereditary culture. You will say that under the supremacy of these orders we should lack security against class legislation, or against the maintenance of existing class laws in favour of the ruling portion of the community. But security against class legislation must surely be obtained by balancing power in the hands of several classes, not by concentrating power in the hands of one? It would follow from your own argument that every class should be represented but that no class should possess an absolute preponderance. I always thought that the Reform of 1832 was an irrevocable step in the wrong direction. Previous to that time there existed

numerous varieties of franchise in different constituencies, anomalous of course, but for that very reason practically convenient. The scot and lot qualification of many towns secured to the working-classes, if they chose to insist on it, a general representation, while a larger share of power—too large, I grant—rested with the aristocracy and the trading classes by means of the freehold suffrage in the counties, of the purchaseable boroughs, and other openings through which men of various orders found their way into Parliament. Lord Grey's Ministry swept away all varieties of borough franchise and disfranchised the entire working-class. They gave equal power to every member of a certain portion of society, whose lower limit was defined by the £10 qualification. This was a manifest wrong to the classes which were altogether excluded from Parliamentary representation, and that wrong was sure sooner or later to exact redress. But the equalization of the franchise, the abolition of its old variety, the destruction of anomalies simply as such, made it obviously inevitable that the next extension of Parliamentary representation could only be effected by lowering the qualification generally; would be not an inclusion of new classes within the constituency but a sheer downward transfer of power. Had Lord Grey appreciated the Constitution he found, and while sweeping away its palpable abuses retained that variety of representation which was its one great excellence, and which was in strict accordance with the fundamental principle of the Constitution—the representation not of numbers but of *Estates* or orders—the next Reform would have tended to give us an

almost ideal Parliamentary system. We should have been able, by developing and improving an actually existing variety of franchises, to secure a representation in due proportion of every class, interest, and order of society, instead of that dead level of democracy to which we are, whether we like it as you do, or dread it as I do, unquestionably hastening; and which, as I have said, simply means the concentration of all power in the hands of a single order of society."

"You seem," said Gerard, "to ignore the question of right entirely; while as regards expediency you seem to me to consider only what is thought expedient by those higher classes to whom you would accord a practical preponderance of power. Now, clearly, no man ought to be placed in a position of inferiority to another, no man should be denied a privilege accorded to his neighbours, without proof, first that the refusal is expedient, and secondly that it is just. Even if, which I deny, you could prove that democracy is not the best form of government among civilized peoples, you would not have proved that the Few however superior in wisdom have a right to govern the Many against their will. What right can the Few pretend to decide whether or not equal rights shall be accorded to all or to the majority? And is it not clear that they have such strong temptation to decide that question in their own favour as should in natural justice take from them the office of decision; seeing that no judge, under any system of law, is permitted finally to arbitrate on a question deeply involving his own interest?"

"The answer," replied Cleveland, "to that argument

is one of historical fact; and to historical facts democrats have a strong and natural antipathy. Practically in nearly every case power is to begin with lodged in the hands of the Few. Those who possess power must *ex vi termini* (in the absence of revolutionary *force majeure*) decide whether and to what extent they will admit others to share it. Whether you will or no—nay, whether they will or no—they *must* be the judges. Ought they, merely because their interest or one of their interests tends to bias them against democracy, to neglect all other considerations, and from a quixotic sort of self-distrust institute a change which they believe injurious, not only to their own rights and just interests but to the true and permanent welfare of the community as a whole, and to the ultimate good of the Many as a class?"

"That argument," rejoined Gerard, "touches rather practical action in a particular case than the essential merits of the question. Suppose a being possessed of absolute power to be framing a constitution for a community of which he is not to be a member. On what ground could he consider it right to reserve to a small minority exclusive privileges, and especially the privilege of governing at their pleasure and discretion fellow-men as well entitled to freedom and self-government as they?"

"Most democratic reasonings," answered Cleveland, "turn ultimately on a confusion in regard to the sense of the words freedom and self-government. It may be an arguable proposition that every man has a natural right to liberty. It cannot rationally be argued that he has a natural right to share in

governing others. His natural freedom he renounces to a greater or less degree in becoming a member of society. He can retain only so much of it as the community chooses to accord. I hold it a primary object that the individual should be permitted to retain as much personal freedom as is consistent in any given state of civilization with the coherence of the community and the rights of his neighbours. But this sort of liberty has no sort of connection with that other privilege to which democrats give the same name; the privilege of sharing in the government of the State at large. No man belonging to a community, democratic or otherwise, can enjoy plenary self-government. What you claim for him under that name is power over others, and to such power no man has a natural right. There is no divine right of a majority, any more than there is a divine right of kings. The nearest approach to natural right that exists in politics seems to me to be the right of a citizen of any given State—say England—to retain the benefits and securities of the law and the general social system under which he was born. But, if change be allowed, it follows that the form of government must be decided by considerations of expediency; not of an imaginary abstract right; and, to use a favourite phrase of Radical philosophy,—the first half of which Radicals always forget to consider—the rightful form of government is that which at a given time and under given conditions promises best to secure and advance “*the greatest happiness of the greatest number.*” In my belief democracy will never do this

except where there exists at least in large measure an equality of intelligence and knowledge, parallel to that equality in political privilege which democracy enforces. A perfect government would be that in which each man's power was exactly proportioned to his moral and intellectual fitness to exercise power, and that of each class sufficient to protect itself but not to oppress others."

"Ay," said Gerard. "I am glad you recognise the moral as well as the intellectual element in the question. If we are to regard the issue as one of expediency only, do not forget that it is at least as important to have rulers who desire the right as to have rulers capable of discerning it. Now, I contend that for many reasons the Few generally desire the right less than the Many. Putting aside these questions of property, as to which we should probably differ greatly in our notions of what is just and expedient, take questions, for instance, of foreign policy. Are not democracies more generous, sympathetic, and just than aristocracies? Was there ever a more signal contrast in politics than that presented by the class hostility of the English aristocracy to the American Union, and the generous sympathy of the working classes even of Lancashire for a Power that in pursuit of a great object was depriving them of the cotton on which they depended for their bread? Or again; is there not something that testifies strongly to democratic virtue in the popular sympathy with Russia that so long contrasted the selfish anxiety of the aristocracy to preserve Turkish domination with all its horrors; simply because Turkish domination, excluding

Russia from her natural career of naval greatness by closing the Dardanelles, suits the selfish national interests of England?"

"In each of those instances," replied Cleveland, "I consider that the Many are wrong and the Few right. But right or wrong, the Many differ from the Few not because they are more generous but because they are more ignorant. The reception of Mrs. Stowe showed that the English aristocracy and middle classes hated slavery as heartily as the masses. The people of Lancashire fancied that the North was fighting to abolish slavery; and that fiction was diligently circulated by men and journals that knew it to be false. Every week Northern sympathisers repeated this statement. Every week the North, through Congress and through President Lincoln, gave them the lie direct and peremptory. Had ever the declarations of the Northern Government that it would grant every security, every guarantee slavery could demand if the Slave States would return to the Union, been brought to the knowledge and comprehension of the English populace as thoroughly as to those of the educated classes, would the former have endured to be starved for four years in order that the Union might be forcibly 'restored with or without slavery'? If they would, their motive would have been one of mere class sympathy; the sympathy of a democracy for the democratic cause. Nay, it would have been worse. Slavery apart, the only source of popular sympathy with the North, had the issues been thoroughly understood, must have been an approval of the claim of a mere majority, and a local majority, of a heterogeneous

Confederation to do its pleasure upon the property, the institutions, and the persons of the minority; in utter disregard of every pledge that could bind a nation and of every constitutional principle and every fundamental law on which the very existence of the Confederation—the only claim of the one section to have any concern in the affairs of the other—was based. Again in this Eastern Question, sympathy with Russia is, allowing of course for many individual exceptions, roughly proportionate to ignorance alike of Russian and Turkish character and rule. Almost every man who can be said to know the East—to know what Russian Government is, what the Turks are, what our so-called fellow-Christians of the Greek Church are—and, above all, by what intrigues the Bosnian revolt, the Bulgarian plots and the Servian war were brought about—is on the Turkish side. It is not democratic generosity, but democratic ignorance and conceit, that inspire whatever Russian sympathies may be found among the English people. And, by the way, American sympathy with Russia—the worst and the most corrupt despotism existing at this day among civilized or semi-civilized nations—bears a very curious and significant testimony to the temper and character of democracy.”

“As you speak of America,” replied Gerard, “you must admit that a case more favourable to democracy could hardly be desired by the most ardent of its advocates. No country is on the whole more prosperous. In none is substantial prosperity more widely diffused, or wealth, outside the trading cities, more evenly distributed. Except in those wild portions of the country which are as yet uncivilized and unsettled,

and whose condition is analogous to that of our own colonial frontiers in face of savage races, life and property are as secure and law as well obeyed in the Union as in England itself. In war, no nation has displayed greater energy, greater resolution, or greater ability to concentrate all its resources on the one paramount purpose of the day; and its available military strength was incalculably enhanced by the democratic Constitution which gave to every citizen a keen sense of personal interest in and responsibility for the policy of the Union."

"You must remember," returned Cleveland, "that one of the first measures taken by the Government, in order to that concentration of force and purpose on the war of which you speak, was a deliberate and systematic violation of all constitutional guarantees for personal freedom, and a violent suppression of all liberty of speech. In a word, the Administration showed its vigour at the expense of defenceless men in the obedient States, of women and children in those which resisted; its original notion of military energy went no further than the sending expeditions right and left to ravage and burn, and pouring into the South the largest possible number of battalions, without a Staff, without organization, officered by peddling publicans and commanded by Generals taken from the lowest class of political attorneys and Congressional rhetoricians. I have pointed out too that certain kinds of property are very insecure even in a State like New York. Nor can you say that life is more secure in the Empire City than in the rudest frontier settlements of Africa or Australia. The exact reverse is the case. The prosperity you

speak of is moreover very hollow. American farmers in the West, like Australian settlers, have ample opportunity to thrive and accumulate, and are probably more independent than the same class in any other land, except the English colonies. But I doubt whether even in the Prairie States, where perhaps the number of well-to-do farmers is greatest, and the land most fertile—where all the resources of civilization are brought to bear upon a virgin soil abundantly supplied with warmth and water—wealth can purchase as much real enjoyment as moderate means can secure to the middle classes of European countries. But both the deficiency of comfort and the general diffusion of wealth with the consequent air of prosperity are alike evidently due not to the political system but to the economical position. Wherever a large civilized population occupies a practically unlimited range of fertile territory, hardly any form of government, if its administration be barely rational, will prevent their achievement of material prosperity and a social equality which no democratic laws can well establish in crowded countries. I am unable to see, and no American has ever been able to tell me, of any single advantage enjoyed by Americans over Englishmen which is traceable to their democratic system of government. At the same time, there can be no doubt that the experiment of democracy has been tried in America under circumstances more favourable than are likely to smooth its working elsewhere. It accords with the social condition natural to a colonial society, and with the wide diffusion of wealth on which you lay so much stress, as also with a greater evenness though a lower quality of educa-

tion, immediate and hereditary, than exists or is likely to exist in Europe for many generations to come. If, then, democracy has been on the whole a failure in America, it stands condemned as incompatible with political well-being anywhere. Now the majority of thoughtful Americans—not impelled by national pride or political ambition to praise the institutions under which they live—agree that American democracy is on the whole a failure. It has not secured a decent administration of justice—so far from it that the respectable and orderly classes have more than once been driven to resort to Lynch law as a corrective of the corruption, licence, and anarchy produced by universal suffrage. It has resulted in signal demoralization, beginning in the public service and spreading thence first through the organization of great companies and then through the community at large, to which only the semi-oriental despotism of Russia presents a living parallel. It has ostracised men of honourable birth and hereditary culture—its native and natural aristocracy—from public life. It has filled the highest offices of State with men whom only the grossest flattery can call gentlemen. It has entrusted legislation to the hands of persons not qualified for their tasks by knowledge or intellectual training, not protected from temptation either by traditional principles of honour or by inherited or accumulated wealth. The consequence is that every part of the political system is confessedly rotten. Every cultivated American not engaged in politics speaks with contempt of the rulers whom the popular vote has entrusted with enormous and often practically irresponsible power. No man has any confidence in the

purity, the enlightenment, or even the professional competence of the State or Federal Courts of Justice. No man dreams that public duty will place serious restraint on party spirit even in the highest offices. The conduct of the Electoral Commission of Fifteen, appointed to investigate the notorious frauds whereby the votes of three Southern States were nominally given for Mr. Hayes, but which decided by a series of strict party votes to sanction those frauds without investigation, has utterly discredited not only the Senate and the House, but that last refuge (till of late) of political impartiality and constitutional justice, the Supreme Court. That body sent five Justices to sit on the Commission, and show themselves no more scrupulous or loyal than the worst political adventurers selected by the Congressional factions. It is universally believed that the prerogative of pardon, in several Northern States and perhaps even in the hands of the highest Federal authorities, is exercised under the influence of the lowest motives—bartered for political service or sold for money. Finally, not being gentlemen, and not having been educated either to govern men at home, or to treat firmly and courteously with their equals in responsibility and superiors in rank abroad—not having been trained to bear or to appreciate that tremendous responsibility of which European statesmen are always conscious—American politicians and diplomatists are apt to be so servile to the American populace, so lawless and so illbred in their conduct towards foreign Powers, that nothing but the inaccessibility of the United States to any enemy save ever-patient England, and their remoteness from the ordinary complications

of European diplomacy, could have averted for sixty years a series of disastrous collisions which would have arisen simply from the character and manners of their democratic rulers and representatives. A more signal instance of the downward tendency of democracy the bitterest aristocrat could hardly desire; and, for the reasons aforesaid, if democracy works ill in America, it cannot be expected to work well anywhere. Again, previously to 1860, the contrast between North and South afforded a striking proof of the superiority of the worst aristocracy to democracy tried under the most favourable circumstances. Resting on slavery—and though I think negroes unfit for freedom, I consider the absolutism of slave-owners the ugliest form that aristocracy can assume—the institutions and the politics of the South were practically aristocratic. Consequently the South elected gentlemen, generally gentlemen by birth as well as by education, as her political representatives, and supported them so steadily as to allow them a lifelong training in political affairs; and the superiority of Southern statesmen to those of the North was one of the most marked characteristics of American public life before the war. The superior quality, again, of the Southern troops—analogueous to the superiority displayed in the first years of our own civil war by the Cavaliers—is a signal testimony to the moral advantage of any system which gives a people natural leaders trained to command and conscious of public duties and of popular respect and confidence.”

“I think,” replied Gerard, “that you exaggerate at nearly every point the vices of a society still struggling out of the rudeness of a colonial condition, and

constantly troubled by the influx of a large immigration from amongst the worst educated and most ignorant classes of Europe. Again your evidence comes from that class of Americans who would naturally dislike the national democracy; those, namely, whom you admit to be ostracised thereby from political life, and who naturally prefer institutions like our own, under which they would be the rulers and legislators of their country."

"The very fact of their ostracism," said Cleveland, "in itself involves a most serious charge against the temper of the populace and the effects of universal suffrage. But I don't think that any one of my statements admits of challenge, or would be denied by candid well-educated Americans, except of course when put upon their mettle by foreign criticism, and anxious from national pride and patriotic prejudice to represent their country in the best light before strangers. Again, the contempt which men of education, birth, and wealth must almost necessarily feel for the ascendancy of mere numbers is in itself a serious objection to democracy. That those citizens who, in right of advantages whereof the law cannot deprive them, are in every society the most powerful individually either for good or evil, should feel a profound and just contempt for the government under which they live, is a source of danger and mischief, far too little noticed or appreciated by most political observers and speculators. Such men can to a less or greater, but always considerable extent evade or defy the law under a democratic and therefore corruptible admini-

stration: especially if as a class they have ceased to respect it. And if they are disposed to do so their example exercises a most pernicious influence over the people at large."

"If," returned Gerard, "they feel such a contempt, and are so disposed to evade the laws of their country, what better proof could you have that they are unfit to be trusted with power? And if they do not respect the will of the majority, what other authority is there that would be likely to command their reverence and obedience?"

"The common opinion of thoughtful and educated men," rejoined Cleveland. "It is only in proportion as that opinion really controls legislation—as it still does in most European countries, and did, until very lately, in England—that the law can permanently command the respect and support of the intellectual classes, and through their influence and example that of the people at large."

"Then," replied Gerard, "you seem to allow that the law and institutions of England are in danger of losing that hold on public respect and affection which you consider them hitherto to have maintained, and which is one of the chief merits commonly ascribed to them?"

"I certainly think," returned Cleveland, "that the 'stream of tendency' sets strongly in that direction. In proportion as the House of Commons becomes the prominent and paramount power in the State, the entire system of government must incur the contempt and disgust which the present character of that House deservedly provokes. It is true that we do not as yet

see or hear much of this feeling, because as a rule those men of culture and knowledge among whom it is strongest simply ignore the petty party squabbles of what is in their eyes little better than a big vestry. But wherever it touches them, where it meddles with subjects in which they are interested, their profound and not unnatural astonishment at its ignorant presumption evinces a rooted contempt as deep as it has been silent. As yet, the leaders bequeathed to it as the legacy of better times—the character of the members for English counties, Universities, and a few great cities—command a sort of deference for a body still containing not a few of the natural chiefs of the nation. But the personal character of the House as a whole sinks very rapidly, and renders its arrogant tone and lofty pretensions sometimes ridiculous, sometimes intolerably offensive. The idea that six hundred sportsmen, tradesmen and fanatics, utterly ignorant of science, should venture to lay down the rules of scientific practice in such a matter as vivisection, was so absurd that this usurpation, perhaps for the first time, made the intellectual leaders of the age aware what the evils of government by such a body really were. Any one who has familiarized himself with the tone and language of debate, who has observed the abject flattery to which the House is accustomed, the almost insane conceit which it collectively displays, learns to appreciate as mere readers never do how completely usurped power and deficient responsibility may turn the head of a popular assembly as well as that of an autocrat. The House is fully persuaded and shows in every step the persuasion that it can do no wrong ;

that the omnipotence of Parliament is not merely a technical phrase expressing the distinction between the unlimited powers of a national legislature and the limited authority of a Federal Congress. When Mr. Gladstone—the most Parliamentary of Parliamentary chiefs, the very incarnation of that arrogance, that disregard for all external authority which characterizes the House—re-modelled the army of his own mere will and pleasure, and justified the proceeding openly and offensively on the sole ground ‘I have a majority in this House,’ even his political opponents hardly showed a fitting sense of the utterly unconstitutional and disloyal character of the justification. Under his guidance and under the democratic influence of the late ‘reforms,’ the House has learnt to think itself superior to moral as well as to constitutional limitations, and commits legislative robbery as readily as under the Tudors it committed legislative murder. Its votes (except in the present state of parties) are turned this way and that by some hundred members from Ireland and from rabble-ridden English boroughs; who individually are not merely not respected but ridiculed and despised even by the middle and lower classes. Even the quality of the leaders is falling off, when an Ayrton can force his way not merely into the Ministry but into that department which gives control over the art and artists, the genius and the science employed in the service of the Queen—when we find Mr. Gladstone for more than a year answering fools according to their folly on countless post-cards, and talking the rant of a Peace-at-any-price platform upon the Eastern Question and remember how recently he

was the despot of the Commons. Grant that irresponsibility has unspeakably deteriorated his judgment and character, the author of the 'Studies on Homer,' while the chief power in Parliament, was the laughing-stock of every tyro in comparative mythology. There is nothing, then, in the character or conduct of the House as a whole to command the shadow of respect from men competent to criticise it; while there is everything to provoke amazement and indignation in its headstrong unscrupulous intermeddling with matters it is incompetent to understand, and its assumption of collective infallibility. Again, Privilege is in itself enough to disgust and exasperate English feeling; used as it is almost exclusively by the least respectable members to secure to them the right of slandering their betters with absolute impunity. An assembly which asserts such a right, and puts no check on its exercise, will ere long visibly forfeit its claim to be considered an assembly of English gentlemen; and, that forfeited, its mere legal authority will utterly fail to command even the outward form of deference and consideration. Of course the law of the land, good or bad, old or new, must be obeyed as matter of loyalty to the Sovereign; but the votes of the House of Commons are not law, and its so-called privileges are, with very few exceptions, usurpations resting on no authority but its own. It is fast losing the rank wisdom and personal capacities that could enforce the respect of men individually equal to its members; and its pretensions are in nowise more reasonable, its character little more entitled to regard outside its strictly legal rights, than those of our parish vestry."

"You speak," returned Gerard sharply, "not as an English Tory but rather as a Greek oligarch sworn 'to be spiteful to the people and do them all the harm he could.' You forget that the House of Commons derives its authority, its dignity, and its claims not from the individual influence or credit of its members, but from their character as representatives of the nation. Contempt for the nation and for its elect savours strongly of an arrogance at least equal to that Parliamentary arrogance of which you complain, and savours also of the characteristic lawlessness of strong aristocracies."

"What right," asked Cleveland quietly, "can the House claim in its representative character? What moral authority can the votes, secret or open, of the populace of our boroughs give to those demagogues or local vestrymen who by chance or by self-abasement contrive to secure the favour of an ignorant multitude? The prescription of a thousand years entitles the Sovereign to the highest reverence that self-respecting men can show to a fellow-creature; and a similar though somewhat briefer and lower title to deference and respect belongs to the House of Lords. The heirs of Alfred and of the Witana-gemot are, in the eyes of men proud of national traditions or sensitive to the higher influences that impress the imagination, raised by their inheritance above the possibility of insult or defiance. But only an extreme democrat would tell me that any respect is due to the opinions of costermongers, publicans, trades-unionists, householders at large, upon questions requiring either historical knowledge or practical education; and if the individuals do not

deserve deference, what consideration can their mere numbers rightfully exact, or how can the votes of such men confer on their elected a better title to respect than their own? I doubt whether the House of Commons consists of better men than any six hundred you might stop at the corner of St. James' Street and Pall Mall. What claim would a decree passed by three hundred and one out of such six hundred have on the attention of any educated man, especially if it happened to contradict his own knowledge within the limits of his own subjects of study? If in such an assembly it were voted that the earth is a plane, or that the uneducated Many are politically more competent than the educated Few, would either absurdity be rendered one whit less ridiculous by such a vote? And considering the profound ignorance of the electors on every point that could bear upon either issue, what worth can attach to the opinion of the elected in right of their election? Worse than this, a large proportion of the House consists of men whose presence there indicates their want of loyalty and scrupulosity; men whose personal knowledge and class relations are such that neither ignorance nor interest can have led them to believe the doctrines without professing which they could never have been elected. The claim, then, of the House of Commons to respect for itself or for the legislation it controls is in the last resort a claim that the competent shall defer to the incompetent, the qualified Few to the weight of ignorant numbers. Politics are, if not a science, a subject requiring study and experience such as only professional students can give; and the opinion of the 'twenty millions, mostly

fools,' who set the Parliamentary machine in motion is worth just as much with regard to the Eastern Question or the Contagious Diseases Act as with regard to the distance of the sun or the nature of the light-waves. When I find democratic men of science ready to let the mob dictate their opinions upon astronomy and geology, I may think it time to consider what value attaches to the vote of the populace or of its representatives on questions certainly not simpler or easier to decide."

"But," said Gerard, "there are among the Many men who have studied politics at least as closely as the majority of what you call the educated classes. These receive the lessons of those political leaders who are essentially the teachers of the nation, and diffuse them among their own order. The majority of the Few probably have given no more study to politics than the majority of the Many: in either case the decision is really that of the leaders, the vote shows only what sympathy and faith the leaders have been able to elicit. Is it true that great men and great truths find more sympathy among the Few than among the Many?"

"I doubt," said Cleveland, "whether truth ever finds favour till it has become truism. As to men, they are best appreciated by those who come nearest to them in intellectual capacity, and have the best opportunities of watching them closely. A leader once chosen on good grounds by the Few is generally trusted to the last; and this fact alone gives a stability and weight to their judgment which can never attach to that of the rabble, ready as it ever is, in the phrase of William III., to cry 'Hosanna!' to-day, and to-morrow 'Crucify

Him!' Again, one in three of the Few, but only one in a thousand of the Many understands politics. As men realize how the House of Commons is returned—the utter absence of all relation between merit and success—will the essential strength which Government derives from the intelligent assent of the Few and the silent deference of the Many be undermined; until not improbably, at some critical juncture, the only rational foundation of authority being thus sapped, the rottenness of the system will become apparent in one grand and final crash; the farce turn into a tragedy, and the history of what we call constitutional government, but what has long since ceased to be anything better than the rule of mere numbers, end in a verdict pronouncing it guilty of the ruin of England."

"I might," said Gerard, "believe in the probability of such a crash without apprehending such fatal consequence. But I would remind you that the ascendancy of those very democratic elements in the electorate which so provoke your contempt secures to the House of Commons the wider and stronger support in the confidence and regard of those who now elect it; and that against their moral and physical force the passive contempt or aversion of a small minority, vain of intellectual culture and hereditary advantages, is utterly powerless."

"Powerless," answered Cleveland, "for good, powerless to arrest mischief, powerless to reform or reconstruct, but terribly powerful—whether the minority wish it or no—to undermine the moral foundations of the authority of law, and of public belief in its wisdom

and justice. When once the populace or the people—call them which you like—fully understand that the intellect of the country despises Parliament, distrusts its capacity, and ridicules its assumption to be something different in essence from a magnified vestry, the people themselves will learn very quickly, as in Paris and in America, to share the opinion of their natural and most competent guides; and the fact that they themselves have created the assembly so contemned will not counteract but strengthen their disposition to shake off the tradition of authority that now casts a delusive halo round it, and to consider themselves in very truth 'our masters.' The fact that not only Congress but nearly every State Legislature in America is returned by a suffrage practically universal (as masculine democrats use that word) does not prevent Americans of all ranks from cordially despising their representatives; from regarding the term 'politician' as one of contempt or reproach, or from setting aside the law whenever the passions of a local majority, not only in a State but in a county city or township, grow impatient of the curb that even mob-made laws impose on sheer mob-violence."

"Look," said Gerard, "at the manner in which the American Governments, State and Federal, dealt with the great railway strike. One hundred thousand voters were at feud with a few hundreds of capitalists; nay, I might double the number of the former and hardly exaggerate the total force of the insurrection. Was there any hesitation on the part of the rulers, any disposition to flinch before an exceedingly popular opposition? No kind of property was so obnoxious to public

opinion as that immediately assailed. Whatever we may think of the merits of the railway quarrel, you and I know that for years past all the enormous political influence of the companies, strained to the uttermost, has scarcely saved them from adverse State legislation. The insurgents had a cause that would appeal very strongly to the sympathies of the multitude. If not absolutely a revolt of hunger, theirs was a revolt of poverty; wages having fallen and employment become more and more precarious for many months before the outbreak. Yet the responsible authorities acted as promptly and vigorously as those of France under the Empire or the German military and bureaucratic chiefs could have done; much more energetically than the King and Ministers of Italy in dealing with Neapolitan or Sicilian brigandage; and, on the whole, the citizens supported them vigorously."

"No," Cleveland answered. "At Pittsburg the authorities, the local militia, and the citizens all sided with the rioters. The same was the case at Martinsburg; and it was only in Southern cities like St. Louis, Louisville, and Baltimore, and in New York and Chicago after the scenes at Pittsburg had frightened all who had ought to lose back to the side of order, that the local authorities and the citizens did their duty vigorously. The power and audacity displayed by an insurrection directed against property are especially ominous where the majority, especially of native citizens, own property, and their most valuable property is their land; and where violent attacks on property as such have till now never been really popular outside the cities. The insurgents, moreover, made the

fatal mistake of firing on the national flag and uniform, an offence which, since the civil war, is regarded with intense indignation by the majority of Americans. Yet the militia were found untrustworthy, and the better class of citizens slow and timid; and the insurrection baffled for some time the entire force of the law and the community."

"Do you think," asked Gerard, "that we should have seen action as decisive and—in proportion to our military force and our infinitely greater facilities of communication, as effective—in England under similar circumstances?"

"I don't," said Cleveland. "Since Liberalism has become dominant here, and found, as in the case of the Hyde Park riots, that the license of city mobs can be turned to the account of political faction, reluctance to put down riot by the bayonet has become one of the worst features of English politics; one of the most disheartening signs of national and official weakness and cowardice. But this is due to the fact that England has become for practical purposes almost as democratic as America, and that the English democracy is, what that of America (save in a few big towns) is not, a proletariat. We have, however, one great advantage over America, and, it would seem, over France. Our social institutions and habits are still aristocratic; and democratic constituencies elect men of property and station to represent them, on condition that these will pretend to believe the crude ideas and echo the cries of an ignorant populace. This degradation accepted, even birth and rank are advantages to a demagogue. In America, at least in the Northern

States, a man of education and fortune, whose father and grandfather have been gentlemen and even eminent statesmen, has less chance of success in politics than a tailor like Andy Johnson, or a rude coarse boor like Lincoln. In no European country save revolutionary France could either of those two men ever have been elevated to supreme power, or held for any time a position of visible importance and influence. All those qualities which render men fit to rule are regarded by the American democracy as the most unpardonable disqualifications. The same tendency is now showing itself in France, and is amid all the dangers of a French Republic perhaps the most dangerous symptom. A similar distrust and envy even of intellectual superiority manifests itself wherever the working-classes have to choose or to trust rulers and advisers, though these be of their own order, and share their class passions. Hatred and jealousy of all personal advantages, whether of birth fortune character or ability, seems to be the incurable universal radical vice of democracy. Boston or Lambeth would ostracize a gentleman as Athens ostracized Aristides and Cimon. It is a common cant of the day that aristocracies are unjust to the people and careless of their welfare. It was by the English aristocracy that all the liberties of England were won; and no attempt has ever been made to limit those liberties to the class that gained them. Whatever personal legal privileges the baronage and gentry of England won for themselves they won also for the yeoman and the peasant. This one fact should be a sufficient answer to all democratic complaints of aristocratic exclusiveness and injustice.

The olden laws of England were made by an aristocracy, and under those laws aristocracy enjoys no privilege, no distinction beyond that inevitable distinction which is necessarily conferred by education, birth or wealth—the inalienable privileges of natural superiority and well-earned influence. There is not, probably never was, any democracy in the world that would do anything like the same frank justice to natural superiority which the aristocracy of England has on the whole done not merely to alien forms of eminence but to its inferiors at large. In one word, envy is the fundamental principle of democracy, and envy is one of the worst and meanest vices of human nature; one of the most dangerous of those anti-social influences that threaten the coherence of society and, as I believe, the permanence of civilization.”

CHAPTER IX.

FEMALE SUFFRAGE AND PHYSICAL FORCE.

“ But however that be, one thing I know,
And this I am free to tell ;
The Devil, my friends, is a woman just now—
’Tis a woman that reigns in Hell.”

ON our return from our walk, Gerard accepted Cleveland’s invitation to remain with him for a few days, though it was not his custom to become a guest in any private house, save in those wild countries where the absence of any sort of hotel or caravanserai throws the traveller upon voluntary if not always gratuitous hospitality. Sitting next to Mrs. Cleveland at dinner, I had fallen into conversation with her respecting the latest news from her native State of Louisiana; and after dinner, when the usual adjournment to the summer-house took place, it chanced that we remained for a few minutes on the terrace, still absorbed in a discussion deeply interesting to both of us; my own sympathy with the Southern people being almost as deep and keen as my fair companion’s patriotic passion. I missed, therefore, the first sentences of the conversation I am about to relate, and when we joined the smoking party Cleveland was speaking on a topic which had been started, I know not how, between Gerard and Mrs. Dalway.

“It hardly lies,” he was saying, “in the mouth of a democrat so ardent and so logical as you, Gerard, to rely upon any appeal to purely practical considerations, any grounds of mere expediency however clear, to justify the exclusion of half your species from a suffrage you are pleased to call universal. If there be such a thing as a *right* to political franchises and privileges, existing not by national but by natural law—and this is always the underlying idea from which in the last resort one finds that the democratic principle is developed—that right would inhere *prima facie* in the species, not in the sex. If, as I affirm, political franchises are given for the common good, and may be withheld for the common good, the evident impropriety and inconvenience of inviting women into the field of politics is indeed a conclusive reason for their disqualification—but the same principle would deprive the vast majority of male electors of the suffrage they use so ill because so ignorantly. I have always thought that the argument from physical force is practically unanswerable, without pretending to consider it the strongest or one of the strongest reasons against the political enfranchisement of women. It is possible, and not very improbable, that even under the existing state of things physical force, should an appeal be made to it, might be found on the side of a minority—might not coincide with the preponderance of votes. But in a constituency wherein women had equal voting-power with men, the voting would be wholly without relation to the real power—that masculine might which pledged by the votes of *men* renders them effective. It might then be that the beaten minority at the polls could at once and everywhere

overpower the victorious majority ; whereas at present the discrepancy between voting-power and fighting-power must always be slight and trivial—too trivial by far to encourage dreams of resistance. Again, no practical issue that can fairly be expected to arise among Englishmen (unless perhaps some Parliamentary attack on the Throne or on property) can be regarded as at all likely to be referred to that ultimate and supreme arbitrament ; whereas laws passed by a majority chiefly consisting of women would frequently suggest and provoke such an appeal. With the exception of the two conceivable cases I have mentioned, I can hardly imagine any political measure carried through the Legislature of a country possessing a liberal or extensive suffrage confined to men, which would in its practical execution so exasperate one part of the people as to incite them to physical resistance, and yet fail to obtain from those who had upheld and carried it in face of an hostility so bitter a support which, combined with the physical force always at command of the legal authorities, would promptly suppress all violent and even all illegal opposition. But if women generally had votes it is very easy to point out half-a-dozen measures they might be likely to press and carry, which would provoke riots and violent resistance on the part of large bodies of men, and would not receive support from any other physical force than that officially engaged in maintaining the law.”

“Do you not in that statement assume,” said Mrs. Dalway, “that a large majority of the men must disapprove of female suffrage and be willing therefore to see it baffled by mob violence ; whereas female suffrage

cannot of course become law till the majority of men shall be prepared to accept it."

"No," said Cleveland, "that assumption is nowise necessary to my argument. The cases of which I am thinking are cases in which the men generally would resent the interference of law altogether. At present, such interference is impossible, precisely because men regard it as intolerable. But women would not or might not so regard it; and thus you might have a numerical majority imposing restraints which the physical force of the country abhorred—not on account of their feminine origin, but as impertinent intrusions of the State into the sphere of private life and personal freedom. Suppose, for example, a Maine Liquor Law imposed on England. Such a law could not, under manhood suffrage or any other wide form of franchise confined to the male sex, be passed unless on the whole a decided majority of male citizens approved it; and such a majority could enforce it with more or less efficiency—could at any rate put down open and violent resistance. But such a law would very probably be passed by the first Parliament elected by a mixed constituency of men and women; the teetotallers *plus* the women giving in a large majority of electoral districts a small majority in its favour. The men might by three to two have approved female suffrage, and yet might by four to one resent such legal interference with their personal liberties, especially when proceeding from a class who would not share the sacrifice they exacted. In that case the police would be defied and beaten, and even the army might be baffled by resolute individual and concerted resistance in any attempt to compel

obedience to the law. This might not matter much so far as that one law was concerned; but the repeal by physical force of one single law legally passed would be a misfortune greater than the passage of half-a-dozen of the worst imaginable laws that feminine ignorance guided by clerical wilfulness could devise, provided that such laws did not shake the very foundations of society. Such a repeal, observe, would alter fundamentally the actual conditions of social equilibrium and strike a mortal blow at that reverence for established authority, that habit of unquestioning deference to law which distinguish the 'Queen's peace' from that maintained by Vigilance Committees and Lynch law at the outposts of civilization. The anarchical elements so strong in great European cities would no longer entertain that 'awe of the constable's staff' which—though the phrase was originally used in jest—is in sober truth the source of that effective power whereby a few thousand policemen are enabled to control absolutely ten times their number of thieves and roughs. Society would then depend for safety simply on the physical force it could immediately command, not on that which, kept always in reserve but felt rather than known to exist, renders the dream of organized violent resistance to law and to the civil power too wild even for the ignorance and brutal stupidity of the criminal classes: which cows the hardiest desperado by a spiritual influence he never dreams of disputing. We should then have to rely on that part of our force which could be always effective and disposable; to say nothing of the cost of such a force—of keeping on foot perhaps some 200,000 policemen—the mere friction which such a state

of things must obviously produce would break up in a few months a machinery so delicate as that of constitutional government—would probably shatter the complicated structure of modern society. Once, in a word, once divorce legal authority from latent potential physical strength—once separate the law-making from the material power of the community—and no government that political ingenuity could construct, certainly no government that a people with English habits of freedom and hatred of all arbitrary proceedings would endure, could last three months. Only a military autocracy, if even that, would be strong enough to stand the moral and material wear and tear, the constant jolts and jars, incident to the task of ruling an empire, maintaining order, protecting life property and female honour, by the sword and the revolver. Evil indeed the outlook of a free society which has once learnt by an impressive practical experience the fatal lesson that there may be, and on certain occasions are, within the State, forces immediately if not ultimately stronger than the State itself, and capable, when willing to run the risk, of beating in detail by open conflict the whole of that civil power on which the authority of the Government and the courts of justice must in any case short of insurrection and martial law repose. To illustrate my point:—At present one policeman will walk into a thieves' kitchen or beer-house, in the midst of a dozen or a score of roughs, all disposed if they dared to support one another, all hating the sight of the civil uniform. He will lay his hand on the shoulder of the favourite member of that society. He says 'I want you,' and the man goes with him: it may be to death,

to penal servitude, to years of imprisonment; and not a finger is lifted on his behalf. Once let political power—the right to make laws—fall into the hands of a majority practically devoid of any physical power to enforce obnoxious laws, and let the law be consequently once defied and beaten by the strength of mere muscle; and the next time a thief or assassin is to be arrested in the haunts of his comrades you must send a whole company to seize him, and that company must as I said before wear not staves but revolvers. How long could an English Parliament carry on the legislation, how long could a Parliamentary Ministry carry on the executive government of a country in which no criminal could be arrested save by a police strong enough to defeat in open fight whatever force the outlaws of a ‘dangerous’ neighbourhood could muster for a rescue? What would be life to Englishmen with their present habits and ideas, with their hereditary love of orderly freedom, when every policeman must be armed with deadly weapons and prepared to use them on the first signs of riot or resistance?”

“All you say as to the consequences of divorcing the physical force of a nation from its legal authority,” returned Gerard, “is unquestionably true; but I cannot see any reason to suppose that such a divorce could under any circumstances be effected in a country so far civilized and educated as England now is, still less that it could be effected by the mere admission of women to the suffrage. It is not because the majority approve every article of the law that their force is in the last resort available to maintain as against riot and rebellion the actual law as it stands. However strongly

sensible men may disapprove any particular enactment or rule of law, they know that to permit its defeat—or, as you express it, its practical repeal—by physical resistance would be to endanger utterly all the authority of law, to destroy all social security and, were such resistance frequently repeated with success, to dissolve society itself. Therefore whatever may be the character or the popularity of our statutes, whatever the authority from which they emanate—at least until that authority has become so contemptible or so odious as to provoke if not a majority yet a large part of the people to attempt or approve a revolution—the law, merely as law, will be backed by the physical force of a community which recognizes that irresistible authority in the law is essential to social existence. For no inconsiderable period the authority of Parliament was detested by a large proportion, I should say by a large majority, of the nation ; yet at no time, even in 1831 during the heat of the conflict about Reform, would physical resistance have failed to meet with the sternest repression at the hands of the nation at large.”

“I am not so sure of that,” answered Cleveland. “We were perilously near an appeal to the sword at the time you mention ; and if we escaped it, our escape was due rather to the forbearance and patience of the ruling class and the moderation of individual Tory chiefs than to the loyalty of the majority, who had been excited to frenzy by Parliamentary and platform agitation. Had the Duke of Wellington acted as many English soldiers, and all soldiers not English, would think it their duty to act, adhered firmly to the King

and the Constitution, defied the insolence of the mob and disregarded the utterly invalid and unconstitutional pretensions of its Parliamentary creatures—had he stood on the plain ground of legal right, upheld the authority of the Crown and the Peers, enforced the law unsparingly, and crushed riots which were in spirit and purpose sheer rebellions with grapeshot and cavalry—a civil war must probably have resulted, for which the Whig leaders would have been justly held responsible. Lord Grey himself and his colleagues at large had used the language and methods of political incendiarism, and had so inflamed the populace that it was scarcely in their power to have restrained their followers out of doors, had the Tories been equally violent and had a decisive defeat of the Reformers seemed probable. Nor, considering their language, have we a right to attribute to those Ministers that true loyalty which would have accepted final Parliamentary defeat rather than appeal to force at the risk of giving over fifty English towns to the fate of Bristol and Nottingham. But to return to our proper subject. I mentioned a law which probably might and would provoke extensive popular resistance—a Maine Liquor Law really depriving the men of their favourite drinks. Do you deny that if such a law were imposed upon us now it would be met, first by direct angry disobedience and defiance, and secondly, if attempts were made stringently to enforce it, by concerted open physical resistance? Or, do you mean to say that while such a law would be resented fiercely by a great majority of the men, it would not probably be endorsed by a majority-vote in most of the constituencies, if the

enfranchisement of women gave them a voting power proportionate to their numbers ?”

“I think,” answered Gerard, with some hesitation, “that if such a law were passed by a Parliament not representing the classes whom it would chiefly annoy and who have least horror of violence—and this would certainly apply to its passage by female votes—it might probably lead to riot ; but I think that, even so, the common sense of the majority would convince them of the necessity of putting down physical opposition to legal authority. And if such a law were passed by a Legislature representing the entire community, if it were notoriously the expression of the will of a national majority, I believe that nearly all intelligent Englishmen would accept it loyally and enforce it as strenuously as any other law against lawless violence ; even though they might insist afterwards on its speedy legal repeal.”

“I think, then,” said Cleveland, “that you are somewhat credulous. The experiment has been tried in America ; and either the moral odium attached to the law has prevented the authorities from attempting to enforce it, or the symptoms of probable resistance have overawed them ; for, as a matter of fact, it has never been practically carried out on any considerable scale so as to hinder any man (outside a military college or garrison) who insisted on having drink from obtaining it.”

“It seems to me,” said Mrs. Dalway, “that your whole argument is thoroughly barbaric. Physical force is the ultimate resort of barbarians ; but to say that it is—even in reserve, invisibly, and as the last resort—the basis of legal authority in civilized communities

seems to me a denial of the fundamental distinction between barbarism and civilization."

"You forget," interposed Cleveland, "the lesson so often taught to Europe during the last century, and confirmed very lately by the conduct of Parisian Communists, of English Trades' Unions and American Railway-strikes, that the lower populace of every country, at least in the towns, is utterly barbaric and brutally savage."

"Surely," Mrs. Dalway went on, "the conscience and the reason of a civilized society would satisfy all its rational members that obedience to an Act of Parliament was equally obligatory in conscience as well as in law, whether the preponderance of force were on its side or not. Surely, if in the present state of the suffrage it were ever so notorious that a majority in Parliament represented a majority out of doors chiefly composed of city artisans and other classes stronger in intellect than in sinews, this fact would in nowise impair the hold of Parliament on the respect and obedience of the country."

"Consider," said Cleveland, "what are the actual bases on which the existing respect for and submission to law depend. Intelligent respect for the authority of Parliament certainly cannot count for much. Whatever claim the House of Commons has to the obedience of loyal Englishmen it derives from the law; and you cannot reason in a circle, and derive the sanctity of law from a body which law alone invests with authority. A small minority among us are sufficiently educated in mind and disciplined in temper to understand that—until law becomes so bad as to be worse

than temporary anarchy and civil war—not merely passive obedience but if necessary active support is the duty of every loyal citizen. The vast majority of the people—who are and always will be what Carlyle calls them ‘mostly fools’—would admit no check on their wills and passions dependent on reasons so subtle and so purely logical. If a resentful temper prevailed among the Many, it would be rendered triply dangerous by the perception which that temper would quicken that the intelligent and independent Few regard with patient but profound contempt the pretensions of a Parliamentary majority elected by the ignorant ochlocrasy of the towns, and owing that election to professed confidence in the inspired wisdom and sympathy with the silliest dreams and worst passions of the town populace, such as no educated man—a few fanatics who want to use the mob-vote for their own pet crotchets excepted—can affect without conscious dishonesty. As a rule, the mere fact that a M.P. of intellect and information sits for an average borough raises a presumption unfavourable to his sincerity. The main strength of the laws at present lies in our ingrained national habit of obedience, inherited from days when Parliament represented property, rank, and intellect, not numbers; and still more perhaps in that sentiment of loyalty to the person of the Sovereign which sanctifies Acts bearing the Royal signature, but which Liberals of every grade and every colour are doing their best to extirpate. You may possibly imagine that under a consistently democratic form of government, including female suffrage, the mere will of the majority would be invested by public opinion with the same authority that now

attaches by immemorial tradition to the Crown, and through the Crown to the Legislature. But in truth the will of the majority has no weight with thinking men, no natural or rightful authority whatever, and will therefore never influence—never has influenced—men once in earnest. The American deference to its dictates is a superstition at least as illogical and, I think, much more vulgar stupid and incompatible with true liberty and self-respect, than the adoration of Russians and other Orientals for an autocratic Sovereign, deriving his right from a long line of semi-deified ancestors. Even logical democrats, like those of France, never pay the least regard to a popular will that overrides their personal preference. Not one of them scruples or ever did scruple to enforce the Republic on a loathing nation; or to commit treason against a Cæsar reigning by grace of the people. When tradition and hereditary instinct have so lost their influence over Englishmen that the political enfranchisement of women no longer seems to them a horrible nightmare, outraging all their innate inherited ideas of decency right and reason, then the ‘superstition’ of loyalty, our traditional habits of obedience to law as law, however irrational—in a word, the power of the constable’s staff—will also have perished; and law will have no other sanctity than it derives from that intelligent logical sense of its necessity which is now and always must be influential only with a very small dispassionate minority. It can derive no sort of binding force from the mere *will* of the majority; and the *judgment* of the majority is so generally wrong—so far inferior to that of the intellectual Few or the experienced One—that

no intelligent man will dream of attaching any weight to it. By that time, therefore, law will possess little other hold on Englishmen than that of physical force; and of that last resort and ultimate sanction female suffrage may obviously at any moment deprive it. I do not say that female suffrage necessarily leads to anarchy. I say only that before female suffrage becomes possible in England all those traditional instincts, ideas, and habits which at present are our chief securities against anarchy will have been, must have been, swept away; for to all these habits and ideas female suffrage is more repugnant than republicanism, revolution, or anarchy itself. Therefore before women can possess the suffrage, law will have been deprived of all its invisible moral sanctions, of all the power it derived from national character, and reduced to depend on the menace or use of physical force alone. When amid this pulverization of all the influences that created and sustain the English nature the suffrage is given to women, that last sanction is gone; the physical force of the nation being divorced from the legislating power, and the latter having fallen, or liable at any moment to fall, into the hands of a numerical majority whom the physical force of a mere fraction of the minority could at once overpower."

"You will yourself admit," answered Mrs. Dalway, "that your argument assumes the probability of a wide divergence between the views of men and women upon political questions whereon the great majority of your own sex feel strongly; so strongly that, if they would not generally resort to violence to enforce their convictions, they would at least refuse to support the law

which offended those convictions against lawless violence. Now is it at all likely, considering the intimate relations of the sexes, that women would attempt to enforce upon men a measure to which the latter so vehemently objected? If the female suffrage of your hypothesis were only that proposed at present—the enfranchisement of female householders—the number of voting women would hardly suffice to cause serious risk of such a divergence as you suppose. If we had universal suffrage in its proper sense, including all adult women and men, the great majority of the female voters would be wives, sisters, daughters, living in constant contact and communication with the men at least of the same household. They would learn what these men thought of their favourite legislative projects, and would thus be aware of the danger and unpopularity of those projects long before they could take legislative effect. Is it likely that they would systematically and wilfully affront those with whom they are living, even if you suppose them silly enough to bring about of *malice prepense* a collision between the law and the physical strength of the country?"

"At present," answered Cleveland, "the authority which men naturally exercise over women might, as a rule, go far to render female suffrage innocuous. Any question on which men and women seriously differed would probably be settled before it came to legislation, or even to voting. Coercion would be applied not in the streets but at home—in one form or another. But the advocates of female suffrage assume the moral and intellectual equality of the sexes; and also, with somewhat more reason, their equality in strength of

will. We must suppose, then, that feminine suffrages would be freely exercised, especially under the ballot (an instrument of secrecy and mystery, admirably calculated to gratify woman's native love of all that is underhand, while men, even in defending it as a necessity, are ashamed of it as a badge of cowardice), without any deference to the mere will of the men. Now all present experience, confirmed by the concentrated experience of proverbs, tends to prove that, when once possessed with a strong feeling or conviction, women are amenable to no argument but that of practical compulsion; compulsion of course in the present state of society generally moral, but not the less felt or less coercive. Give them votes, and teach them that they have the right, as under the ballot they would have the power, to use those votes without deference to the wishes of husbands and fathers, and they would assuredly give or attempt to give legislative effect to all their passionately-cherished views. A prohibitory Liquor Law I think they would assuredly try to pass, in spite of all risks and in defiance of all menaced consequences. Nor can we much wonder thereat. The evils of drink are such that nothing but clear and cogent convictions could compel thoughtful and earnest men rather to endure them in reliance on voluntary and moral remedies, which are slow of action and are not yet visibly operative, than attempt to stamp them out by remedies of the violent philanthropic kind, various indeed, but all alike in their essential characteristic—all pervaded by the impatience and the reckless indifference to personal freedom that belong to the philanthropic temper. Such resolute

adhesion to principles impressed by intellectual conviction—clear enough to control sympathy, and restrain active and eager minds from going straight to their object by whatever means—is not very common among men; it is never found among women. On this, and on some half-dozen other questions of almost equal importance, women—partly from the difference of their social functions and habits, partly from their ignorance, mainly perhaps from their incapacity to subject their feelings to their reason—do on the whole think differently to men. For example, the conclusive arguments which in both Houses crushed the anti-vivisection frenzy at the height of its popularity, the exposures which for a moment frightened into silence the most shameless of the masculine slanderers of science out of doors, never affected for a moment the female agitators whose arrogant self-confidence was strictly proportionate to their ignorance of all the facts of the case. A Parliament returned by female votes would have persisted in its original folly, unshamed and unshaken. There are at this moment measures known by all competent men to be of the highest importance to the welfare of mankind—measures which, strictly enforced, would do more for the physical health of posterity than vaccination itself has done—which cannot be carried in their integrity, although the overwhelming majority of intelligent men approve them, and the vast majority of unintelligent men who form the constituencies care nothing about them, because the latter at least are cowed by the furious indignation such measures would excite among the women and the clergy. These facts, I think, sufficiently show that

there would be great practical risk under female suffrage of that kind of violent divergence between the politics of the two sexes, whose consequences I have indicated. But it is not necessary for my argument to insist that such divergence must occur or to show where it would take place. I need say only that at least it is not grossly improbable. The mere possibility of such a thing proves that female suffrage would expose the community to a constant risk of a divorce between legal authority and physical power; and you yourself do not deny that such a divorce might imperil the very cohesion of society, the existence not merely of civilization but of such social order as prevails among all but the lowest barbarians. No one has ever shown that any sort of advantage could be expected from female suffrage which would counter-vail so terrible a danger, even were the chances of its actual occurrence less than on reflection most reasonable persons will admit them to be."

CHAPTER X.

FEMALE EQUALITY FUTURE SLAVERY.

AFTERWARDS, in the drawing-room, Mrs. Dalway renewed the discussion. "Surely," she said, "the reasons urged in favour of female suffrage are grave enough. Of course most men think the existing laws relative to the relations of the sexes fairly reasonable, or they would not remain in force. But from the point of view of those who advocate woman's rights or female suffrage these regulations are utterly intolerable; and obviously they are not likely to be repealed until sooner or later the possession of the franchise gives practical weight to woman's opinion and woman's experience."

"I doubt," replied Cleveland, "whether there be a single law affecting the relations of the sexes which a large majority of the women would repeal, except some of those affecting property. Even on this point women as capable and intelligent as a fifth-form schoolboy would learn, if they would not own, when the whole subject came to be discussed in all its bearings, that they were wrong. Driven into a corner, they would have to admit that the rules they think so unjust are founded not on masculine selfishness, but on a well-grounded conviction that laws apparently more just to women would be chiefly effectual to shelter dishonest

debtors and to facilitate fraud. It is practically necessary that the property of a family, whoever is its legal owner, should be available to meet the debts which the repute of that property has enabled them to incur. If the man is to answer for his wife's debts, if he is to be wholly liable and solely liable for her maintenance, he must control her expenditure and apply her income. In one word, the law should be framed to meet and accord with the facts of daily life ; and the fact in ordinary cases is that the moral responsibility for the family expenditure, and the practical control of property, rests with the husband, and that the wife enjoys her full share of all benefits derived from either ; so that in equity her property should be more fully liable than it is for the common debts or expenses. Settlements enable all women who wish it, or their guardians, to secure their property before marriage, rendering the domestic partnership one of very limited liability. The recent changes in the law give effectual protection, as a rule, to the wife's after-acquired property or earnings, as against a husband whose interests are *not* identified with hers ; for the cases not covered by this legislation fall under the yet more effective guarantee of settlement on one hand, or the complete and supreme relief of divorce on the other ; and if some wives are gravely wronged in matters of property, this is due to their ignorance of law and business rather than to legal injustice. They need the protection of settlements against their own weaknesses—vanity, selfishness, or love—rather than against any legal injustice. Their 'hard cases' are generally cases of simple blundering. And if they were put on an equality with men in

regard to property they would as a rule suffer infinitely more from the want of this protection than they do now from any chance advantage taken by their husbands of their legal incapacities. On the whole our law, as corrected by equity and administered by the courts, is exceedingly favourable to women; and wisely treating them as children, makes very large allowance for their intellectual inferiority and practical ignorance. It will let a silly lad of twenty-one ruin himself, while it denies that privilege to the cleverest of married women. It relieves them from their deliberate acts, and even guards them in so far as it can—very needlessly—against the influence of conjugal affection and of that feminine submission which is now a tradition of the past; refusing to recognize the acts of a wife except under conditions intended to insure that she knows when she is giving up any right or interest of her own, and is neither deluded, overawed, nor over-persuaded. On the other hand, the obligations imposed on a husband whose wife misbehaves herself are most onerous, and often operate most cruelly. A lawyer of large experience once told me that for one case in which a woman has been practically wronged by the law—apart from her own folly or ignorance—he had known three in which husbands have been for years mercilessly plundered, and eventually ruined in fortune, honour, and happiness, by unprincipled wives whom they could neither control nor cast off.”

“Your law,” answered Mrs. Dalway, “gives us an insulting generosity instead of that simple justice which every self-respecting human being would prefer.

Set us free from all those restraints which hinder us from acquiring a masculine knowledge of business—put us exactly on a level with men in regard to liabilities and rights—and we could ask and should need no more.”

“They say,” answered Cleveland, “that one single achievement transcends the omnipotence claimed by Parliament—it cannot turn a woman into a man. I think your demand trenches on this limitation. I am sure that the one rule in favour of women which sexual equality must first sweep away—the obligation of the husband to maintain his wife—is of more value to your sex than all the rights that the strongest of strong-minded women could claim for them; and that the most absolute equality, accepted by usage and guaranteed by relation, would be dearly purchased by a surrender of this one among the many legal and social privileges of your weakness.”

“You forget,” rejoined Mrs. Dalway, “that wives are in turn obliged to support their husbands; and that when a wife is, in virtue of some special gift, able to earn much more than her husband could do, this obligation is very often practically enforced. Again, the wife renders in every household services for which her maintenance is only a just return. No husband is obliged by law to give his wife more than he would have to give to a housekeeper.”

“You mistake,” answered Cleveland. “By running into debt a wife can force her husband to give her whatever a jury chooses to consider suitable to her position and rank; and juries—consisting of the class who profit by feminine follies—always encourage extravagance by putting a very liberal interpretation on this rule.

Moreover the husband is compelled to support a wife even if she is visibly and notoriously, by her own fault, a burden and a curse instead of being a help. She may be drunken dissipated idle, even unfaithful and treacherous; but the man must support her, perhaps while paying another to do the household duties. Many an honest man has been first stripped of his all, then degraded in repute and destroyed in health, driven to despair and drink, and finally consigned to the doom of a felon, for no fault but having married a bad woman, no dereliction even of technical duty but in rebelling at last against the iniquity which has broken up his home and is starving his children for her benefit. The worse a wife is the more difficult does separation become. Any woman can make a man glad to let her go by means which the law would *not* punish. True that many, perhaps most wives can be quite as easily compelled to agree even to harsh terms of separation. But those women of whom men most justly wish to get rid are of course those least sensitive to any but physical coercion; those who have cast off duty, respect, and even self-respect, and will hold to their advantage in spite of any pressure but such as the law *will* punish. A bad woman—any woman of unscrupulous tongue or temper—is more than a match for any man at all weapons but those which the law will not allow the man to employ. In practice a wife can now get rid of her obligation to support a bad or indifferent husband with comparative ease, whereas it is all but impossible for a husband to release himself from that obligation towards a wife if she has not been guilty of the one sin which enables him to claim a final and full divorce, but which

sometimes displays less thorough badness of nature than that of the mere shrew and scold."

"Look at your law of divorce," answered Mrs. Dalway. "One single lapse from conjugal fidelity entitles a husband to divorce his wife. No number of such offences, if unattended by gross aggravation or cruelty, entitle a wife to divorce her husband."

"The declamation of certain too notorious women on that point," said Cleveland, "has always seemed to me something worse than foolish. Does any woman really suppose that infidelity means the same thing, involves the same wrong, or can safely be visited with the same consequence, in the case of either sex? We know that none of you act on that doctrine in regard to life before marriage; why afterwards? In truth it cuts as directly across the truest and deepest instincts of womanhood as across the practical sense of manhood. First, the mere physical consequences are vitally different. A husband cannot impose upon a wife a child which is not her own. Secondly, the keenest intuitions, deepest and widest-spread habits, the instinctive God-given morals—not merely of the human race but of all the higher animals—regard polygamy (the analogue of masculine unfaithfulness) as tolerable, and polyandry (an organized system of female infidelity) as utterly revolting. It is plain then that innate convictions so old and deeply-rooted as to form an essential element of human nature—convictions which must and ought to affect our laws, because otherwise the law would lie against and provoke to revolt the national conscience—justify the distinction which the law, following human instinct, draws between feminine and

masculine unchastity. Lastly, so long as those instincts exercise an almost universal influence on both sexes alike, the legal distinction is a practical necessity. The permission of divorce would be the negation of marriage, if not guarded by the principle that divorce is not to be practically attainable at the will of the parties; that it shall not be effected by consent. Therefore it must not be granted for any cause which is not held to disgrace socially the offending party. If it were, divorce by consent would become practically easy, and the legal requirement a mere formality. The wife's infidelity so nearly ruins her and so shames her husband that it cannot be made a common means of effecting consensual divorces. The husband's infidelity, if it sufficed, could be so turned to account. If, in one word, a married couple could obtain a divorce for reasons not involving public infamy, it would only be necessary to agree that one party should commit the wrong required by law and that the other should detect it; and thus the Divorce Court would in its own despite be rendered a mere Court of Registration, to give effect to dissolutions of marriage agreed on by the parties; and marriage would thus be rendered—to the utter ruin of woman—little more than a partnership during pleasure.”

“And why not?” answered Gerard. “By what right can the State compel any two human creatures to spend their lives together? By what exceptional right claimed in no other case can it enforce a contract which both the parties to it are anxious to rescind? And if the State justly recognizes its inability thus to enforce ordinary contracts against the will of both

contractors, how horrible is the tyranny that can attempt to enforce the one contract which reluctance on *either* side renders revolting, nugatory, and intolerable. All moralists who do not assume what is called revealed religion as the basis of their code, agree that—if the closest relation of the sexes is not to be reduced below the level of that which pairs together any couple of birds or of the nobler animals—it can be hallowed, elevated, and sanctioned only by mutual love. Yet the law enacts that this most intimate of all relations shall continue when love has ceased not on one side only but on both. It is hard, without using words too offensive for general conversation or for printed discussion, to express a tithe of the loathsomeness of compelled marriage. Prostitution is to sensitive and refined feeling a horrible abomination; but that social evil *par excellence* is far less horrible than the Mezentian cruelty that binds a living heart to a rotting corpse in the compulsory continuance of a conjugal relation which has become hateful to either party.”

“Pardon me,” answered Cleveland, “if I say that half your argument is mere declamation. The law cannot compel a reluctant couple to live together as man and wife. It has scarcely pretended effectively to compel their unwilling residence under the same roof. All it says is that, having deliberately entered into a contract defining their relations to each other and to society, their own caprice shall not set them free from their legal obligation. Only those insane saints and inhuman heroes, the Puritans, tried to prevent the choice of new partners by criminal procedure.

Civil law only refuses to recognize and give legal validity to the change. No woman can practically be forced to remain in more than name the wife of a husband she hates, if she prefer to leave him and renounce her claim to share his property or earnings; and if she shrink from this sacrifice to freedom, she deserves to remain in bondage. All then that you have said about the exceptional loathsomeness of compulsion in regard to this particular contract falls to the ground. It bears on to the theory of the relation, not upon any practice that has prevailed for centuries past. But you say the State has no right to enforce a contract which the parties wish to rescind. Granted. But who are the parties to marriage? Not only the husband and wife, but also two others; the children and the community. Unless you can show that the interests of society at large,—and of those who in the course of married life are brought into a world in which their life-long happiness or misery may probably depend on their parents—would not be imperilled if marriage were terminable by consent, you cannot logically deny to the State, whether as guardian of the children or on its own behalf, a potential and theoretical right at least to enforce those conditions of the contract in which either itself or its helpless clients are interested.”

“I cannot see,” rejoined Gerard, “that the State has any legitimate interest of its own in the purely private, domestic, personal relations of any two of its citizens. I cannot see that the difference of sex justifies the enforcement of a domestic any more than that of a commercial partnership. Of course the children must

be cared for; and that I think is the one condition of divorce which the State has a right to impose. You may say that no mere pecuniary provision would do justice to the children; that the parents owe them a home as well as maintenance and education. I agree with you. But no possible guardianship—no orphanage or school—can be worse for children than that of parents hating one another and constantly at variance. Or, admitting for purposes of argument what you allege, that separation is practically always at the option of either party—a dogma whose practical and universal truth I can by no means allow, the difficulties encountered and sacrifices required often amounting to practical prohibition—the guardianship, either of a remarried mother or of a stepmother would be preferable to that of a parent separated from his or her partner, yet forbidden to marry again. To such a parent the children must be a constant reminder not only of a hateful past full of pain and humiliation but of a cruel present restraint. And if the parent violently break through that restraint, the consequences, moral and social, will probably be such as to render him or her thoroughly unfit to guide and educate the children of the original marriage. The State, then, cannot, whether by compelling the parents to remain together or by forbidding them to remarry, confer any real benefit on the children. All it can do is to ensure for them an adequate maintenance—and in the present state of society I ought perhaps to add, a fair share of the parents' property. At present the law does in practice allow a total separation, with such arrangements for the welfare of the children as the parents agree on, say that the father

shall take the boys and the mother the girls. Why in the world should it fancy that it will injure the children to permit total divorce on similar terms? What do the children gain by forcing the father to keep a mistress instead of a second wife?"

"There is great force in what you say," returned Cleveland, "as applied to those extreme cases in which the choice lies between a separation formally unrecognized by law but protected by legal settlements, and complete divorce. I am not prepared upon the spur of the moment, if ever, to say confidently that the children gain by compelling their parents to remain unmarried. But my argument was directed not to the question of policy but to that of abstract right. You said that the State had no moral right to enforce a contract which both parties were willing and anxious to rescind. I answered this common but assuredly unfounded doctrine of our radical moralists by reminding you that the contract of marriage affects more parties than those immediately contracting it, and that these parties—or rather the State as one of them, and as ultimate guardian of the other—had a clear right to a voice in the dissolution of the engagement to which it was on its own behalf and on that of the unborn children originally a party. You cannot deny that right. You cannot maintain after reflection that obviously false thesis, that marriage is a contract wherein only two parties are interested, on which the revolutionary doctrines of divorce at will are based. Your argument, then, descends from the lofty but perilous pinnacles of abstract right to the lower but better-defined ground of policy. You say that the State acts unwisely if it interfere to prevent a divorce

desired by both parties, because it cannot by such interference protect the interests in its charge better than it could do without enforcing a loathsome life-embittering bondage on the reluctant partners. But when the question becomes one of policy, we must look not to individual cases but to general results. Grant for the sake of argument, or rather of *the* argument, that it is better, when conjugal confidence and goodwill have been utterly and finally destroyed, and mutual antipathy has taken their place—better for all parties to that one marriage to allow its total dissolution and to give a full release. Legislators must still consider what would be the effect on married couples in general—upon the ideal and reality of family life, and the social morality which has its roots therein—of a permission which would, as you must see, reduce marriage virtually to cohabitation during pleasure. The mere fact that marriage is so difficult to dissolve is a principal check on the wish to dissolve it, and on conduct tending to make its obligations apparently or really intolerable. Knowing that they must either live together or live unmarried, husbands and wives never practically look to or think of divorce or separation as other than a last and most painful resort. They count on living together for the rest of their lives; and therefore on making the best of one another and the least of faults or differences. They are restrained from letting their irritated spirits fix on the hope of change. If they were able to part at pleasure, every sharp quarrel would lead to a threat of divorce, and pride, temper, caprice or lust would in hundreds of cases cause the fulfilment of the threat. There would be far less mutual forbearance, far less

tenderness, far more quarrelling and more bitterness in each quarrel than at present. Is it not eminently probable that if marriage were dissoluble on any terms short of dishonour it would be dissolved in ten cases at least for every one in which at present the parties seriously wish to dissolve it? I think so. If it will not bitterly offend, Ida, I should venture to guess that half the marriages that take place would, if divorce were as easy as marriage, be dissolved within the first year. Do you not think," turning to his wife, "that at least there would be a great many marriages broken up in the first year which afterwards turn out very happy ones?"

"No," answered Mrs. Cleveland, decidedly and indignantly. "If husband and wife, or either of them, could be tired of each other in the first year, I do not think they would ever be really happy afterwards. The children might bring them a little nearer, and under the gradual influence of habit render them tolerant of the chain and careful to strain at it as little as possible. But if marriage is merely endurable, not enjoyed, it is a lamentable failure; and far better that it never had been contracted. Nay, do you seriously think that a merely endurable union would endure? Of course you know that I as a Southerner and as a Christian do not think divorce should be allowed in any case save that for which our Lord Himself provided."

"Nay, Ida," said Cleveland, with a smile of blended pride and tenderness. "I did not mean to say that marriages would be broken up in the first year by weariness or dislike; though, considering how hastily and foolishly half of them are made, the extensive operation of such motives seems more probable to me

than it does to you. But, especially where both parties are very young, the first year of marriage is often severely trying to the temper and the patience of both. The chain is felt constantly, checking this or that free movement to which we have been accustomed; and irritates as it never does when we have become used to its pressure. There is as yet too much of passion and romance, too little of experience and solidly-founded esteem, to allow the domestic machine to work without a great deal of friction which irritates, and of jars which disappoint us. If husband and wife could give instant effect to the anger or disappointment of the moment, they might often part in haste bitterly to repent at leisure when repentance was too late. As it is, a longer mutual experience brings them back to their earliest feelings; shows how unreasonable was the disappointment, how trivial are the vexations, how invaluable and how true through all momentary collision and annoyance is the affection on which the marriage was originally founded. After the honeymoon, I believe that most married couples, I am sure that not a few happily-married men, would if they spoke frankly admit that the first year of marriage was certainly not the most peaceful; was in many cases perhaps the fullest of delight but seldom the happiest; and that as a rule it was the one in which there seemed most risk of alienation; often the only one in which anything like alienation seemed conceivable. I had long since lost all pretension to the indulgent excuses made for the irritability and impatience of youthful passion before I married, even if I had ever had any decent excuse for either, or if my temper had been

less controlled by years of discipline; but if *you*, on reflection, recall no shadowy memories of conscious constraint and chafing—if this little circlet never seemed a burdensome fetter—then we have been from the first much happier than those husbands and wives who pass for happiest among their friends.”

“And so we have,” she said, in a very low tone, and with downcast eyes. “But I should be sorry,” she added, more briskly, “to think that any considerable number of married people are so galled by the chain supposed to be of roses as to wish to break it before the flowers have begun to fade.”

“Rose chains,” said Cleveland, “do not hold firmly; and any firm bond must, I presume, check and chafe our moral being frequently and sharply till we get used to it. The best horses do not run well together till they have learned mutually to accommodate their natural paces; and however anxious human beings may be so to accommodate one another, it must take time to learn the pace that, if it suit neither exactly, suits both together. But, putting aside the first year of marriage, and putting aside also those rare exceptional marriages which are so thoroughly happy that no grave annoyance or irritation ever disturbs the smoothness of their course, there are necessarily a large proportion of the entire number in which discontent and vexation are frequent, yet which nevertheless probably tend to the happiness of both parties more than any conditions they could secure under an unfettered license of change. How many of these marriages would endure if divorce without disgrace were attainable? Would not divorces be so frequent

as to make all marriage seem insecure? And is it not notorious that wherever divorce has been frequent society has become rapidly demoralized, and in the end has gone to pieces? Frequency of divorce characterized the decline of the Roman Republic and the early Empire; and in a very few generations the stern Roman virtue to which the conquest of the world was largely attributable had been exchanged for a rottenness of corruption in every department of life,—in the household as in the Senate, in the relations of the family as in those of the State—so hideous in its all-pervading shameless filthiness, so utterly without redeeming merits, that no writer of our fastidious days dares to describe it. Christian apologists complain, and probably with better reason than is common in controversy, that they cannot duly glorify the moral victories of their religion because they cannot describe the enemy it conquered—‘they cannot tell us what Christianity *did*, because they dare not tell us nakedly what (imperial Roman) Paganism *was*.’ So long as the stern household morality of the early Romans prevailed—when divorce was seldom heard of, and when, though he possessed power of life and death over his wife as over a child, no Roman husband found occasion to punish the infidelity of a Roman matron—Roman Paganism was scarcely less pure, and perhaps if judged from an impartial standpoint even more heroic, than Christianity. When once conjugal morality was sapped by facility and frequency of divorce, Roman virtue decayed with startling rapidity into the most loathsome corpse-like corruption which a thoroughly vitiated civilization has yet developed.

Divorce is not legally and formally possible in France; but public opinion has given a sanction to separations and allowed a license to illegal unions, which practically enable men and women in the idle and in the literary and artistic classes to change their partners almost at pleasure without incurring grave reproach. The result is that the fiction of the latest French school depicts, and I believe truly depicts, a state of moral putrefaction among those classes such that a Swinburne or a Walt Whitman dare hardly hint what the favourite novelists of Paris describe in detail. If you would wish to see what equality of rights and license of perpetual change—the perfect freedom claimed by the logical advocates of Woman's Rights—can practically do for men and women, you must probe, or study the writings of those whose artistic diagnosis—as in the novels of the younger Dumas—has probed to its depths the utter coldness and foulness of heart, the cancer of indescribable selfishness, which pervade the life of a large fraction of Parisian society: that society to the portrayal of whose condition and character a whole race of novelists have devoted all their powers of observation, moral analysis, brilliant writing and vivid description. In that society, and probably in no other now existing, the relations of men and women are what the logical advocates of Woman's Rights would have them—what the practical development of sexual equality would make them everywhere. French law does not permit legal divorce; but this society is large enough to defy the censure of opinion and evade the penalties of law. Men and women can change their partners at

will without fear of reproach or social excommunication. What is the result? Regard it as painted at first-hand by the sternly accurate hand of the one great artist of the modern French school, Dumas *fils*. Note how he is confirmed by more partial and coarser witnesses—not in such books as those of Ernest Feydeau, George Sand, Paul Musset, which revolt not only morality but decency, and which it would be an insult to any Englishwoman to suppose that she could read—but in the pale shadow thereof reflected in an English criticism “French Fiction—the Lowest Deep.” The life of woman in that society is slavery indeed, and slavery to the hardest and most brutal of masters. Love descends into a mire of brutalism whereof the brutes are guiltless; of selfish wanton cruelty that might shame the devils. Were the worst pictures of the worst forms of married life—as caricatured by epicene spouters and by female writers who have generally reasons of their own for vilifying the domestic life from which they have shut themselves out, and slandering the matronhood which refuses to touch or see them—not only true but representative; were marriage what George Eliot and George Sand would fain make us believe it—still the married life of England would be for women a Paradise in comparison with the life of ‘freedom’ as it really exists. The best, most devoted, most loving—ay, and most loved,—mistresses of Parisian Bohemia are treated by their masters ‘as no gentleman would treat the poorest *fille perdue* who still retained a woman’s decency and a woman’s form.’ Let a woman once conceive a true however faint image of the realities of that one society

wherein 'divorce at will' practically obtains, and there is an end for her of all aspirations after a liberty which means license of ill-usage on one side and license of submission on the other; which makes affection a source of unmixed misery, and the last relics of feminine delicacy available only as means of torture in the hands of lust and cruelty."

"In considering the position of women," said Mrs. Dalway, "whether in ordinary or exceptional situations, you must bear in mind the social as well as the legal bondage in which they are held. You must take account of the education denied them, of the difficulties thrown in the way of profitable occupation, and the severe and iniquitous moral exactions imposed by public opinion, as well as of strictly legal hardships and disabilities. How are women of the society described by the younger Dumas—and I do not question the truth of your account thereof—reduced to the slavery you so emphatically denounce? How but by those masculine tyrannies which deny them first the education that enables men to earn their own living, and secondly, liberty to work for bread in any decently-paid employment? Had they been fairly treated for two or three generations, and were their sins against orthodox morality as leniently treated as those of their masculine accomplices, they would not be worse off or more enslaved than the latter."

"I think," rejoined Cleveland, "that no one who looks at their situation in the light of practical experience will agree with you. If it be as no doubt it often is for a money price that the *anges dechues* sell themselves to the bondage described, if they sacrifice purity

for bread or for luxury, it is a significant fact that such a despair of self-support or lack of self-respect should be found, that such female slavery should exist, precisely in that country and in that capital where women are most generally acquainted with business, where the law places them in regard to inheritance and property on a footing of perfect equality with the other sex, and where the errors to which you refer are treated more leniently than in any other part of the world."

"Men," replied Mrs. Dalway, "have contrived everywhere to enslave women, because men make the laws and customs on which the situation and the fate of women depend. Among savage tribes women do all the hard work, and really contribute more to the maintenance of the family than do their husbands; and yet they are slaves merely because they are weak. The same kind of injustice is done to them everywhere. Here, at least in the higher classes, men do not expect or willingly allow the women of their families to work for bread; but, save in the richest households, they work almost as hard as the men; and yet their share of the common income is miserably small, and is given to them as a favour and not as a right."

"I have heard these things said very often," returned Cleveland, "but I never heard an attempt to prove them. Effective as themes of declamation, they are not argument, and they contradict diametrically the facts of our own daily life and practical experience, as well as the plain lessons of common sense, confirmed by the accounts of those who really understand schemes of life wholly different from our own. Savage tribes are far too poor to waste their power by devolving the

hardest work on the weaker sex. It is because maize can be cultivated with a tithe of the muscular strength required in a buffalo-hunt that the women till the ground while the men devote themselves to the pleasanter but far more arduous duty by which the meat-supply of the tribe—its principal sustenance—is secured. Turning to the more familiar life of a civilized nation, it is only in the families of town artisans, and in a few exceptional classes elsewhere, that women, unless thrown upon themselves and left to the independence you desire for all, ‘work like men.’ I grant that their household duties might not improbably prove more trying to men than men’s hard outdoor work; but to women they are infinitely easier than men’s work to men. The women of households which can employ servants do not do two hours a day of what men, if they had to do it, would call work. And as to their share of the common income, it is by far the largest. Grant that they have not pocket-money proportioned to that of their husbands. Grant that among the lower classes the men spend more in drink than is spent altogether on the objects, pleasures, and interests of the women. But from the lowest to the highest class of intellectual labourers, among professional men, men of business, men of moderate independent fortune, three-fourths at least of the expenditure of the family is incurred for the women’s pleasure. The large houses, the ornamental furniture, all in fact that does not contribute either to material comfort or the gratification of personal taste as contradistinguished from fashionable ugliness—all that enormous proportion of the expenditure of the higher and upper-middle

class that goes on society, on show, or in 'keeping up appearances'—represents the expense incurred by the women and for the women. It is for women that five-sixths of our carriages are kept. It is for women that we spend on our houses, gardens, excursions, what, if saved, would enable us to retire from work at fifty with incomes sufficient for everything we care for. I speak more freely and confidently on this point because my household is one of the very few exceptions to the rule; because I care as much as a woman for most domestic elegancies and luxuries, and because my tastes and fancies have ruled the arrangements of our home. But as a general rule three-fourths of all middle-class and higher-class incomes after providing food and clothes—in which exception I do not mean to include the ball-dress or evening-dress of either sex, seeing that both exist for female gratification—are spent to please the ladies. How should it be otherwise, that a bachelor with £500 a year is notoriously a far richer man than a married man without children and with an income of £1500? It is chiefly to the extravagant tastes, the wilful exactions and unreasonable demands, the self-indulgence if not the selfishness of women—above all, to the silly slavery of Fashion—that we owe that terrible increase in the hardness and the length of intellectual toil, in the weight of business anxieties, whereof physicians and statisticians give such alarming pictures; an increase which has probably caused more disease, more suffering, mental and physical, more premature deaths, more worn-out constitutions than any folly or vice of our own sex, drink and perhaps those errors of which women are the direct object

excepted. In one word, among the educated classes, from the lowest almost to the highest, nineteenth-twentieths of the work is done *by* men, and fifteen-twentieths is done *for* women. Why, the mere arrangements of our households prove it. One-third probably of the cost of furnishing goes to the drawing-room and the wife's bedroom, or boudoir. Her rooms are always and incomparably the choicest in the house; so much and so universally is this the case, that they are built in a different style, of a size and with arrangements which prove that the builder's customers generally consider these the paramount element in the choice of a dwelling, and are prepared to spend on them what the most luxurious and selfish men with equal incomes would never dream of spending on their own apartments. Compare the studio of a painter or the library of an author with his wife's rooms. Compare the conveniences of the place where he *works* with those of the rooms where she amuses herself, 'receives,' or sleeps. Look at any one average middle-class or upper-class dwelling with intelligent eyes, and you will hardly care to repeat again the statement that women have less than their fair share of the joint-income; even could they fairly pretend to have earned or saved one half of it."

"What you say," interposed Mrs. Cleveland, "as to the large share of expenditure which is really devoted to women may, if it is very unchivalrous, be true—as some of our French creole friends in Louisiana would say, 'brutally true'—as regards mere domestic outlay. But men spend on themselves a great deal of which they keep no account. I saw the other

day an estimate in the *Spectator* of this expenditure (cigars, club, luncheon, cabs, and so forth), and on the whole I think it came to quite as much as the cost of drawing-room furniture, parties ball-dress and so forth in families which do not keep a carriage; and when the stables are at all well furnished, surely half their cost should be set down to the men's account."

"Well," answered Cleveland drily, "when I was a bachelor journalist—that is, one of the profession whose personal expenses are necessarily or naturally largest—I spent on cigars, club luxuries, cabs, and most expensive of all whist, something less than £60 a year. Even in this neighbourhood I think we spend more than that on the five or six dances and evening parties you give in the course of the year—the sole pleasure of yours which I do not enjoy. Understand, *chère petite*, that I do not complain of the ladies' share of expenditure. A good wife, like a good book, is so rare an article as to be worth a correspondent binding; worthy of having her sweetness and grace duly 'set off' at the sacrifice of much selfish indulgence and the cost of much hard work; nor do I think that any gentleman grudges that share of the domestic expenses which really contributes to his wife's comfort or enjoyment, or to the real elegance of the background of the home picture. What sensible men do intensely grudge is the money that goes upon mere show, 'keeping up appearances,' and wanton household extravagance; by which the lady of the house saves nothing but a little wholesome thought and trouble, and gains nothing whatever. There is, however, one side of the question which women would do well to consider.

Marriage is becoming so costly that a large proportion of the trading and professional classes, and a still larger proportion of the men of moderate independent means, never marry or postpone marriage until late in life. The result is that one-fourth of our women do not find any opportunity of marrying; and, since old maids are comparatively rare among the lower orders, it can hardly be an exaggeration to say that of educated women not more than three-fifths can find partners for life. Something is radically wrong in a state of society where this is the case; and, since the instincts and habits that lead Englishmen to desire a recognized and honourable home are stronger than among any non-Germanic race, the blame must I fear be laid on the women. Either they make married life too costly for our means, or they mix so much bitterness in the cup that it is not worth having at the price. Probably they commit both errors. They are extravagant and exacting. They are petulant and disobedient. No man of sense will willingly render himself liable to be driven into indefinite expenditure by a partner he cannot effectively control. No man who knows the supreme value of peace and conscious security—the absolute necessity of twelve undisturbed hours in each day, full of real repose or placid enjoyment, to the completeness of the whole—to coherent thought, to the exercise of the higher powers of the mind, to the loftier flights of imagination or invention, to profound research or lucid exposition; nay even to steady persistent work and sound practical judgment—will wittingly expose himself to be at home the victim of a spoiled child's wilfulness or a jealous woman's humours.

Better no home at all than a house barren of all that distinguishes the home from the lodging—a house resonant of fretful tones, savouring of selfish exaction, into which a man who loves and needs peace as all busy minds or aspiring souls do love and need it enters with fear and doubt, and from which he departs with a sense of relief and temporary escape. The strongest and bravest, cursed with such domestic unrest, achieve little or achieve only things imperfect and unsatisfactory: the sensitive and susceptible give up in despair or, forced by need to continue working, work as slaves at the mill in a dull routine, without the heart to aspire or the spirit to strike out anything original or novel. No reflective thoughtful man but must hesitate to form a partnership for life in which there is not a power of final absolute decision in case of difference: and in marriage such decision must rest with the man. Even in a commercial firm nothing goes well unless, practically at least, one partner can in the last resort be sure of having his own way. *Interest reipublicæ ut sit finis litium.* Whether the decision be right or wrong matters less than that there should be a decision prompt and final. This is tenfold more essential in domestic life because the decisions to be taken, though nine in ten are much more minute and unimportant, are for that very reason much more likely to cause difference of opinion. Now—passing over the fact that with most women argument is but a polite synonym for vituperation, and discussion means quarrelling—it is intolerable to any man of strong principle or clear convictions to accept responsibility without proportionate power. The head of the house-

hold, if he have a conscience, feels that he cannot delegate the duty of final arbitrament on all questions likely to affect the welfare of others ; but, if the fulfilment of that duty means angry debate or sullen reluctance, he finds it in the long run too hard to be performed. Unwilling and sulky compliance, if loyal in act as men's compliance generally is, may be endurable in a masculine partnership, where association with a sulky junior, never very close, ends at dusk. But such submission, qualified by taunting words or black looks, is intensely painful when yielded by a woman to a man who has enforced it only from a strong sense of duty, and whose peace and comfort in his leisure hours are utterly ruined by little signs of sullen or bitter feeling such as no stranger could discern ; by the cold light in the eye, the sharpened sound of a voice strained half a tone above its natural pitch, the indifferent formal kiss, and the 'good-night' whose accent will give the keynote to restless thoughts and distressful dreams. I believe that, while 'broken hearts' are comparatively rare, hearts crushed or worn out by want of that repose which feminine spite and temper so completely mar, account for half the broken promises of a bright genial high-aspiring youth as well as for half the rapidly-increasing physical and moral failures of our educated and ripening manhood. And how many men die, not exactly of a broken heart, but of diseases only fatal because the heart-broken man, with his despondent spirit, shaken nerves and lowered vitality, has no resisting power left—he only could judge who should be allowed to search the marriage-registers of Hell."

"You invert the truth, surely," returned Mrs. Dalway, "when you ascribe the cruelty to women and the susceptibility to men. In this case it *was* the lion who painted the received picture; and you are hardly entitled to reverse without evidence the sentence passed by masculine humanity upon itself."

"Women cry easily," retorted Cleveland, "and for that reason men suppose that they feel keenly. I pity from my soul a strong man driven to sobs: a sobbing girl or hysterical woman generally deserves the old nursery recipe—'give her something to cry for.' But men die of heart-disease and women don't; men have a pretty close monopoly of the deaths that indicate unstrung nerves, and of those mysterious cases in which the victim seems to perish simply because he has not the will to live. If women have pretty rooms, pretty dresses, plenty of amusement, and a certain number of visiting acquaintances, nothing short of Spiritualistic seances or the Confessional seems capable of impressing them too deeply."

"If so," interposed Gerard, "it must be that the men are not worth feeling for. The woman, whether made *for* the man or not, is made *by* him; and the wives of each generation bear the impress that the men five or ten years older have stamped upon them. As a rule, the individual wife is what her own husband makes or leaves her, the image of his virtue or the rebel against his weakness; always the female portion of any society reflects the influence of the male. Women are what men desire or what men deserve."

"In that case," rejoined Mrs. Dalway, "the celibacy of so many educated women is not necessarily the

supreme evil Mr. Cleveland thinks it. It is not strange that they should wish to retain freedom and identity rather than be subdued to the nature of average men ; and all we need wish is that marriage laws were less deterrent, and that it were easier for the unwedded to live on the fruits of their own labour."

" 'Choose each his way,' " said Cleveland. "If forty per cent. of our educated women preferred celibacy to a marriage of semi-sentimental semi-sensible affection, or independence to matrimonial chains, their choice would prove that something was wrong, but would not indicate the quarter from which the ill wind was blowing. But unluckily it is not a matter of preference. The women are only too glad to marry if they can get any 'decent body' to take them. As to our marriage-laws, I endeavoured just now to put an example that might show you how they all co-operate for the protection of the wife not only against ill-usage, but against anything like effective subordination. Nearly every provision practically tells in favour of the voteless sex. Even were Mill's 'subjection of women' a practical fact and not a legal theory, I should say that it tended as much to the benefit of the subject as the subordination of children to parental authority. Have you never noted how ill-pleased women are with a simple release from this obligation—a mere 'please yourself ;' how resolute they are to make a man accept the responsibility of their disobedience to his wishes? Again, the rules legal and social which compel the husband to maintain his wife even after she has quarrelled with and left him, after she has been for years a sheer and very heavy burden, are a proof of the extreme tender-

ness of masculine legislation for female weakness, a tenderness utterly unreasonable unless it assumed and implied liability to domestic control. But take the fundamental principle of marriage itself—the rule of permanence. That law was made by men. It is the one safeguard of women; the one rock on which their happiness, honour, and security rest. If marriage could be dissolved at pleasure the position of women would be one of absolute, real, hard slavery; not of that theoretical imaginary slavery of which the strong-minded platform-mongers rave and rant. If the sexes are once recognised as equal—if each woman as each man is to be a separate self-contained responsible unit before the law—this permanence of marriage can no longer be enforced. In the first place, common sense will insist that there can be no permanent and compulsory partnership without subordination; and subordination cannot be enforced—can hardly be admitted—by law, as between partners who start from a footing of recognized equality. Secondly—the children once provided for—I admit that Gerard is right in so far that it will no longer be practically possible for the State to compel on mere grounds of general policy, liable of course to dispute, the maintenance of a contract which the immediate parties to it desire to rescind. This claim on the State's part would be regarded as tyranny in *any* case where the State's safety was not visibly and primarily concerned, as it is concerned for example in matters affecting its defensive forces: it would be resented and resisted in exact proportion to the directness and closeness of the individual interest and the remoteness of the public interest, really or

hypothetically affected. Marriage, so intensely affecting the personal contractors, so remotely and indirectly concerning the State through its influence on individuals, is of all contracts that in which the exercise of such a reserved privilege on the part of the legislature, even were the right theoretically conceded, would provoke bitterness unspeakable if not actual rebellion. Marriage then in its present form—marriage in any sense, that distinguishes it from a mere precarious alliance, a voluntary cohabitation recognized but not guarded by law—requires and rests on the subordination of the woman. I think, and statistics on the whole seem to suggest, that men's willingness to marry is even now impaired by that state of opinion which allows wives to be insubordinate and not ashamed. The first, clearest, most certain result of that equality which women claim must be the abolition of marriage—or, if you prefer the phrase, the recognition by law and opinion of divorce at will. How will this affect women? You say that they will get their liberty, they will be able to leave an uncongenial partner, and their very power to leave him will ensure them better treatment. I state your view fairly? Well then, first, the women who displease their husbands will be got rid of as easily as the husbands who displease their wives. For one man who wishes to retain a wife against her will, there will be at least ten women who cling to a husband after he is tired of them, whether the clinging be due to habit, to necessity, or to their greater conservatism and natural timidity. Thus, where sexual equality and the absolute freedom of union and separation that equality

involves might rescue one wife from injustice and misery to which existing laws do or may contribute, it would break up a hundred homes at present safe and quiet: it would reduce to a choice between abject bondage and utter wretchedness, slavery or starvation, an overwhelming majority of women who are well content with their actual case. They could not even appeal as now to legal or social protection against any but the most atrocious cruelty. A tyrannical master would not as now apply the poker first and consider the consequences afterwards; he would bid his slave submit beforehand or go forth to starve. You cannot compel an equal to support an equal, merely because they once lived together on terms with which the law will have no concern. This is not all nor the half. If under the present law a man desires the society of a woman in the prime of youth and beauty, and desires at the same time to live with her publicly—unaffronted, unshamed by the women of their own rank—he must pay a very high price: no less than the obligation to support her, to retain her for life as his sole partner and to forswear all other women. Establish the equality of the sexes with consequent freedom of divorce or rather precariousness of marriage, and there will be no such price imposed by law or custom. The man will be able to obtain the companion he desires, to keep her with him as long as he pleases and no longer, and to dismiss her precisely when she has no longer anything to offer for which other men will bid. Will you tell me that women will not accept such terms? I reply that the number of women who, by the difficulty of finding husbands at present, are

compelled to accept very much worse terms, shows conclusively that you are wrong. Self-support is infinitely more difficult for a woman who has to earn her bread than for a man—not in virtue of any conditions proper to the present order of things alone, but in virtue of facts common to every state of things that can exist while men and women are what God made them. Physiological conditions, intellectual inferiority, psychological sensitiveness, physical weakness, all place women at a terrible disadvantage as competitors with men in the labour market. In all crowded countries the enormous majority of the sex must be supported by men or must starve on wages proportioned to the value of their service. Leave the two parties then free to make their own bargain, and men will always be able to secure the society of women of their own rank pretty much on their own terms. The prayer of the weaker—and remember the more numerous—sex will be ‘give me a morsel of bread, that I may eat and not die.’ Any man capable of earning the subsistence of a family will be able to purchase a woman as his absolute slave by the mere promise of shelter, food, and clothing. Rich men will be able on nearly the same terms to purchase as many as they please. A few women of special charms may, while those charms last, command a much higher price; but never so good a price as the least attractive wives command now—the price of permanent protection and maintenance during life. The law of marriage is founded on man’s instinctive consciousness of the ineradicable distinction between the sexes, and of the shameful injustice of measures that should leave the dependent to treat with the protector,

the weak with the strong; the one who must have a master breadwinner and defender, with the self-reliant, to make their own terms with one another in a matter wherein the life-long happiness of the weaker is intimately involved. In traditional religions—in those ancient customs of extensive range wherein Lecky, M'Lennan, Tyler, trace the remnants of primeval law—we discover, side by side with such survivals of pristine civilization as the four-fold restitution and the blood-feud, indications of the idea plainly worked out by Moses, that the self-surrender of a maiden, especially if proven and consecrated by the birth of a child, gave her unextinguishable claims on her possessor or lover. Bond or free, captive or tribes-woman, wife or concubine, she had acquired by the sacrifice of her virgin charms a right to the permanent protection of him who had enjoyed the sacrifice; he must not sell her or force her into a stranger's embrace. It is, I think, one of the great defects of Christian proselytism in all ages and countries that the Church, not even yet emancipated from the ascetic traditions of the martyr and the monk—a celibate priesthood turning marriage into a mystic sacrament typical of a still deeper mystery—has set herself to abolish polygamy as a sin, not as incomplete marriage but the negation of marriage; and caused this just and merciful principle of simpler and older religions to fade from the conscience of Christendom. Heathenism, while it preserved the thought embodied in this rule, would be less likely than formal Christianity divested of that principle to encourage the brutal selfishness of habitual open profligacy. But woman once recognized as the legal and social equal of

man, competent for self-protection, forfeits the manifold and immemorially recognized claims of confessed helplessness to exceptional protection from the law. She must then make her own terms for herself, and her bargain must be sealed in good time on penalty of starvation—in most cases the inevitable forfeit if she fail to find a purchaser. The demand is necessarily less than the supply, because marriageable women in old societies are always more numerous than men; therefore the general substitute for marriage will be a partnership during pleasure, on condition that the weaker party shall accept the will of the stronger as her absolute law. The first bargain made destroys—to state the case with brutal simplicity—some one-fifth of her value. The first child born reduces it by one-third. Ten years cut it down to scarcely the tithe of what it was. She cannot then, she dare not break away from any master however stern and severe. She dare not forfeit his protection by appealing to the law against him. If she does, the chances are that she will starve. At best she can only obtain another master, probably no better than the first; nay, worse and harder because unsoftened by the ineradicable influence of remembered youthful love. And she is worse off than any slave in this, that, whereas the worst slave-law compelled the slave-owner to feed and clothe his slaves in their old age, *her* master can cast her off, and has every temptation to cast her off, just when it is absolutely too late for her to learn any means of maintaining herself in independence, and when she has lost the attractions by which she originally secured a home—if it could be called a home. And this is what the advo-

cates of sexual equality call woman's right! This is the legislation which women claiming unusual strength of intellectual perception would substitute for that masculine legislation to which they owe the position they now enjoy in marriage, and the respect which that position secures even for unmarried women!"

"Before either Gerard or Mrs. Dalway attempts to answer your main argument," said I, "I should like to point out what may be minor flaws therein. Would not the introduction of polygamy countervail that overplus of women which, as you say, obliges many of them to sell themselves for bread now; and which under the system you apprehend would, you think, render the supply so much greater than the demand? Would not rich men, left free to purchase as many women as they please, absorb the excess, and thus equalizing demand and supply enable the remaining women—of course the enormous majority—to make fairer terms for themselves? Again, most women when they come to marriageable age have still parents able to support them, and a home; so that they are not placed under that fear of immediate starvation which you truly say would force them to take any terms they could get. And, finally, you say, and I agree with you, that masculine legislation has instituted marriage laws which—if they are unjust to either sex—favour women rather than men; which at any rate afford to women very effective protection against the license and selfishness of our sex. Would not the same sentiment which has prompted our existing marriage legislation protect women from the

hard treatment you apprehend when the protection of those laws shall be withdrawn?"

"I will answer your last question first," said Cleveland. "No, for several reasons. First, religion is the essential sanction and popular defence of our present thoughts and laws on this subject; a fact that you will admit to be historically true, though the Founder of the prevailing faith never condemned polygamy. Next, when once equality between the sexes is accepted as the basis of their legal rights and mutual relations, it becomes obviously impossible to forbid women to associate themselves with men on such conditions as they please to make; impossible to enforce either legal or social penalties on the exercise of the liberty which *ex hypothesi* they will have secured. It is impossible by law to protect free and equal citizens, enjoying the full privileges of personal independence, against themselves. At present we protect women as we protect minors. When women are acknowledged as the equals of adult men they must obviously take the responsibilities with the liberty. Indeed they could not enjoy the liberty till the protection was removed. Again, in theory at least, the subordination of the wife is an essential part and condition of that which we now call marriage, as distinguished from mere voluntary cohabitation; and though in this epoch of transition women may practically enjoy the advantages of marriage while repudiating subordination and refusing obedience, this state of things is at once illogical and inconvenient. Practical convenience constantly dispenses with logic; but an illogical inconvenience cannot permanently

endure. It could perhaps scarcely have endured till now, but that, when men are young and ignorant enough to marry, they are vain enough of their strength and careless enough of the experience summed up in a thousand proverbs, to believe that they as individuals will be able to rule their own houses, though they see their fathers abandon the dream as a wild delusion. The obedience repudiated in petulant words or saucy smiles, will—so thinks the self-conceit of youth, inspired by conscious strength, and spirits never tamed by the throbbing of yet unconscious nerves—be gracefully yielded or easily compelled. These illusions dispelled, men will think twice—or thrice, like Mr. Gladstone when pressed to abolish the oldest element of our Constitutional system—before they accept an indissoluble union with women whose tempers and tongues they do not expect to control; or subject their honour peace fortune self-respect, their every hope of happiness, of comfort, of dignity and decorum, to the will of those whom law may indeed regard as men, but whom Nature has made women, and will not unmake. Common prudence must stand aghast at the peril of life-long dependence on the caprice of the capricious and the mercy of the merciless. Opinion, then, will not enforce an absurdity, nor enthusiasm prompt men to put repentance out of reach; and women will be left to their own resources and their own bargains—happy indeed if legal equality can afford the shadow of compensation for natural weakness. Indeed, as you know, the logical wing of the sect who advocate that equality, or nearly all of them, insist strongly on the abolition of marriage in

the proper sense of the word. Set aside the law which protects them, and women must be slaves even if they should be well-treated slaves. I admit that when men ask girls to become—whatever may then be the name for half-married wives—they will not as a rule contemplate either ill-usage or desertion. But instinctive prudence and native love of power will prevent them from binding themselves absolutely and legally, even were the rule of law prohibiting perpetuity superseded in this case, to keep for life partners whose complaisance can only be secured by uncertainty. Meaning to be kind and tender masters, they will mean in the interests of both parties, to keep the mastery in their own hands, and to do it by the surest and most obvious means. They will not “offer more than the market price;” and even if they entered into a voluntary perennial compact, it could scarcely be legally or practically enforced against them. The law even now will not admit of permanent irrevocable partnerships except in marriage; and when men and women are equals that exception, even if long maintained, must fall at last under the common rule. Within one generation after the equality of the sexes has compelled the toleration of precarious marriage, men will have learnt to regard perennial, irrevocable union as they would now regard a contract for life-long service; and the law, following opinion, will ‘abhor a perpetuity’ in the closest of associations more than in any other case. To be bound for life to a suspected wife or distrusted husband will then be thought far worse than a perpetual engagement of a servant, a doctor, or an attorney. Also, when social

opinion no longer operates to prevent a man from changing his partner, he will always be able to force a woman to consent to divorce, even if legal divorce should still be needful. I am therefore right in saying that masculine tenderness will not prevent women from being slaves, and slaves deprived of the essential right of slavery—slaves liable to dismissal. As to their *treatment* in this practical slavery—so different from the existing privilege of weakness to which that name is given—that will no doubt be always better than the treatment of ordinary slaves; inasmuch as in youth the passion of love, and in later life its memory, will make most civilized men gentle—while unquestioned masters of the situation—to the companions of their hearth and bed, of their brightest days of happiness and moments of keenest joy. But it will hardly be much better than the present treatment of faithful and agreeable mistresses by their lovers; and all its alleviations will be equally precarious. Then, as regards parental protection, the parent will no doubt wish to obtain the best terms he can for a daughter; but he will not be able to secure her from the necessity of making those terms promptly, unless he can leave her an actual competence. Competition will prevent his obtaining for her a position essentially different from that which orphan maidens are willing or obliged to accept. He will have to tell her:—‘You must make your bargain now while you have youth and beauty to offer. If you wait till my death, you will be forced to find a master; and you will then have comparatively little to offer him. You may starve: at best you will fare hardly.’ The

prospect of ultimate though not of immediate poverty and need, the necessity of making her bargain at the best moment, will press upon the daughter in average homes almost as strongly as the fear of immediate starvation upon her fatherless rivals. The one advantage or rather mitigation of their lot, which under the supposed conditions parental affection would give to girls, would be of a different kind. Some fathers having anything to leave would then bequeath it to their daughters, securing to the latter the means of bare subsistence in celibacy or divorce even if they left their sons penniless. But this would only last till the new order of things had become matter of course. Finally, polygamy will never produce a very serious impression upon the marriage market. The number of men who can afford two families, and are at the same time willing and desirous to incur the discomfort and actual danger arising from fierce feminine jealousies, will not amount to more than enough to absorb, say, some ten per cent. of the marriageable women; and the natural overplus—consisting, first, of some five or six per cent. produced by nature in excess, and, next, of the women answering to the men who cannot afford to marry as yet—must be rated—even after the colonies are provided for—at from 20 to 25 per cent. Now a 5 per cent. excess—in the quantity of an article of which the consumption does not increase in proportion to its cheapness—is sufficient to reduce the price by 20, 30, or even 50 per cent. If then, after the harems are provided for, there remain even 105 or 110 marriageable women for every 100 men at once willing and

able to marry, not only the five or ten who are actually redundant but *all* will be compelled by their tact competition to accept any terms better than they could earn as celibate labourers; and as celibate labourers in a state of society like that we now contemplate women could hardly earn their bread. Take into account at once the greater comfort, the more abundant food and clothing offered them by the men, together with the natural attractions of love and domestic ease, and women in such a state will accept the most precarious home rather than try to earn their living in solitude and independence."

"In the first place," said Mrs. Dalway, "I think you have no sufficient reason to impute to the advocates of Woman's Rights as a class a desire to abolish marriage. They all object to many of its present conditions; they would all insist on the perfect equality of the sexes, and on equal terms of divorce. But only some of them would be willing to dispense with laws or social usages practically enforcing the permanence of domestic unions. You insist, however, that such permanence is incompatible with equality, at least that its legal enforcement must cease when women are recognized as perfectly free agents; and I am not prepared to disprove your reasoning, though I think the common conviction of both sexes that such permanence is essential to the happiness and respectability of women would in one way or another render that permanence all the more secure when women's voice in legislation was equal to that of men. I am sure that polygamy would never be approved by women; indeed I do not suppose that you think so; but you argue that if the law ceases to inter-

tere women will be compelled to submit to this and to other evils for the sake of mere subsistence. You think ill of the sex if you suppose that they would as a rule forfeit honour for the sake of bread."

"Pardon me for interrupting you," said Cleveland, "but I am sure that most men would do the same. Two in three find it so hard to get a living by brain-work that, if they found an alternative so easy as that which would always be open to women, they would be sorely tempted to embrace it; and female equality would soon sweep away that instinctive feeling and those social usages which make the acceptance of nothing short of Christian marriage woman's one point of honour, and render acquiescence in polygamy degrading to her self-esteem."

"I differ with you," returned Mrs. Dalway. "But let us admit all you say as to the incompatibility of legal protection or social enforcement of marriage with the rights of women as now claimed. Still your whole argument rests upon a fallacy; the assumption that women, if perfectly free, unrestrained by legal hindrance physical force or social coercion, could not earn a comfortable living for themselves. We see that in exact proportion to their independence they can do so. In America they have no difficulty whatever in earning not merely bread but an ample subsistence and a comfortable home; because in America they are not restrained by usage or law from choosing employments in which they can earn fair wages. The fact that in England they cannot do so proves nothing; for in England they are practically excluded from all but the least lucrative employments. Give them an education

equal to your own, protect them from trades'-union violence, release them from all unequal conditions which prevent them from competing fairly with men, and in all employments not requiring great physical strength they would be able to hold their own; and if they can hold their own with men as competitors in the labour-market, if they can even earn a decent subsistence, your whole argument falls to the ground."

"No," said Cleveland. "First, you *cannot* safely allow young ladies to go about the world and mix on terms of perfect freedom with men, as professional life and education would require. If you do, you will in ten years stand appalled at the consequences. The examples of a few women exceptionally cold, prudent, intellectual, and unattractive to men afford no rule for the sex at large. And women would always be under one fatal disability. Marrying at twenty they would be for some ten or twelve years withdrawn by the conditions of maternity and of domestic life from the completion of their practical education and from outdoor work; and if at 30 or 35 they returned to the labour-market, they would find themselves placed at a disadvantage which even the most apt, intelligent, and courageous among them could very rarely overcome; which even men would regard with dismay."

"You forget," said Mrs. Dalway, "that they would be perfectly aware of this; and would not withdraw from a profession and renounce their independence without exacting as an equivalent full security for their maintenance after they might cease to be agreeable to their husbands."

"I do not forget it," said Cleveland, "but as you say

I do not believe in their power to earn their bread except on terms that would soon drive them to accept gratefully any sort of marriage. The exceptional experience of some American women misleads you, as American examples have misled every class of reformers, revolutionists, and democrats one after the other for the last half-century. The situation of America and our temperate colonies is peculiar and transitional, and no person can reason soundly on economical and social problems who does not recognize what elements, unlike anything to be found in old-established communities, enter into the situation of empires bringing all the resources of civilization to bear on an unlimited area. It is not only that America is a thinly-peopled country, with far more land than for generations to come her people would be able fully to cultivate. Many thinly-peopled countries are among the poorest in the world. But the United States, Canada, and Australia unite with the advantages of a scanty population the advantages of that high civilization which could only have been developed in densely-peopled lands. Their position therefore is wholly exceptional and artificial, and cannot possibly last long—as duration must be regarded when we speak of the future destinies of our race. As communication becomes easier, education more general, and the timid clinging to home and country consequently feebler, population, at least the population of the higher races, will distribute itself evenly over the habitable globe. There will then be no country so crowded as England or Belgium, but also no country so sparsely peopled on a fertile soil as America or Australia. It is because in

America there is more employment than hands to do it, and not more women than men willing to marry, that women can earn an independent living there. But even there I doubt whether they earn the wages of men, except in employments where wages are settled by opinion and not by competition. Even in the better class of schools for girls they are commonly enough subordinated to a masculine principal. Clearer proof of the inferior value of their labour than on careful investigation America furnishes could hardly be required. Again you very justly insist on equal education as a condition of sexual equality in adult life. Now equal education is only possible where—as in the United States—the education of both sexes is bad and superficial and either falls much below the powers of masculine intelligence, or ceases before the age at which the disadvantage of sex begins to be felt. Very young girls are often quicker in acquiring formal knowledge than boys, though they show much less willingness to *think*, and consequently I believe do not digest, assimilate, or even retain what they learn nearly so well. But at the critical age of education, say from 13 to 18, the inferiority, intellectual and physiological, of the softer sex begins to tell. Women have weaker and less-enduring brains than men even when they have minds equally quick and apparently not less capable of the lower functions of mental acquisition—mere reception and learning by rote. I have studied with some care the evidence of teachers and physicians of both sexes respecting American female education. That study has satisfied me, as I believe it will satisfy every impartial inquirer, that for

several reasons women cannot receive what men call a thorough education. Of course there are exceptions. There are women with brains essentially masculine. But in almost every instance these women are devoid of the peculiar attractions and distinctive moral characteristics of their sex. They are for the most part women unfit to be wives or mothers. If you take not indeed the average girl but a clever girl, who has nevertheless a merely feminine brain and physique, you find that in nearly all intellectual respects she is far inferior to clever men of her own age; and especially inferior in all those higher developments of the mind which are the most important results of education. She may learn as quickly and may remember as well, though the latter is seldom the case; but she does not, when offered a precisely identical education, reach that strength of working intelligence, that power of thought, that inventive originating capacity on which the success of clever men chiefly depends, and the cultivation of which is the chief purpose of education in its higher stages. If for a few years she is forced into something like equal competition with the other sex, she purchases this gratification of her vanity at a terrible price. Physiology has made it the law that regular vigorous exercise of the brain, if not too extravagantly prolonged, should tend to the health of youths between 13 and 20. Every teacher or guardian of boys knows that full employment for their minds, compatible and coupled with ample exercise for the body, keeps them in better health than they would otherwise enjoy; prevents the premature development of passions which, whether indulged or

denied, seriously affect unformed constitutions. Anything like the same degree and amount of work—a similar diversion of vital force—has (as is established by ample and irrefragable evidence) on the other sex a constitutional influence altogether mischievous, arresting nature in her rightful course and sacrificing health: an effect so distinct in character as to prove that nature, in adapting woman's physical frame to the functions of maternity, unfitted her to be the competitor of man in intellectual as in physical labour. In one word, average women can only purchase the mental training which could enable them even to enter the fields of lucrative employment open to average men, by a sacrifice of health involving their happiness and usefulness as women. And when that sacrifice has been made—when they have been martyrs for years to those physical sufferings which in their case are the almost invariable consequences of attempted departure from the laws that limit the use of their brains in order to employ the forces of the constitution in other directions—they find themselves, from the very consequence of this training, utterly incapable of holding their ground in the unnatural and unequal 'struggle for existence,' for which at so terrible a cost they have endeavoured to prepare themselves. Again, the physical susceptibilities and mental inferiority of women, especially their want of nervous and intellectual *force*, must always incapacitate them for effective daily competition with men. Very superior women may of course beat average men; but average women must starve if their bread depends on their power to compete with men of a proportionate

mental calibre. Their historical inferiority is not a result of individual education, because many of the great intellects of the world have owed little to education. Yet among the highest class of intellects there is not on record the name of a single woman. In the second rank, since history began, some two or three women may claim a doubtful and disputed place. The very cleverest of their sex, Corinne and Mrs. Browning in poetry, Mrs. Somerville in science, Harriet Martineau in politics and philosophy, rank at most with third-rate men. It is absurd to say that this inferiority is due to inherited deficiency of education, for such deficiency would not be transmitted exclusively or chiefly to the same sex. On the contrary, the intellectual character of the daughter is rather more commonly derived from the father, though it is of course usually inferior in strength to his; and that of the son very commonly comes from the mother, though it develops a strength and power far greater than hers. Nothing but ignorance or extreme prejudice can induce any one who has carefully considered the subject, either in its historical and statistical or in its practical and social aspects, to believe that women are not naturally and inherently the intellectual inferiors of men. As their fingers have often greater delicacy and quickness of touch, as their senses and instincts are often quicker than ours, so their finest intellects may show a subtlety, and much more often a delicacy and susceptibility of imagination, seldom found among men of talent, though not so unfrequent among men of genius. But in intellectual *force*, in sustained power of mental work, they stand on a lower level as compared with men than even in

inherent physical strength. You may say that there are many employments in which their peculiar and admitted aptitudes would render them superior to men. You may name printing and telegraphy. In the former I suspect that want of endurance and accuracy will always place them at a disadvantage, not so great as in most other occupations, but great enough to be fatal wherever the labour market is full. In telegraphy, selected as a peculiarly fitting occupation, they have shown incapacities that indicate the probability of their failure in a great variety of other occupations which *primò facie* might seem suited to them. Their nerves seem too irritable to endure the strain of constant vigilance and rapid perception, and their health is said to give way under it whenever they are tasked as men may be tasked in the same labour without injury. No one who has had to do with them as clerks, telegraphists, or in any other business capacity, wishes to have them more largely employed in anything which will bring him into contact with them and render him dependent on their attention, temper, courtesy, or efficiency. Friends of mine who have much to do with the post-office telegraphs say that they would go half a mile further to find an office served by men rather than hand numerous or critical messages across a counter where women are employed. Direct experience, then, as well as historical evidence and physiological science, establish by concurrent testimony the distinct inferiority of women for all the harder practical business of life. They are about as fit to earn their living in the work of the outer world as men to take their place in the care of a family. Even

in their own domestic sphere they are beaten by men wherever the natural functions of the sex are not in question. Men cannot nurse babies, or manage very little children so well as women ; but men are better cooks, better waiters, and even, as French households can testify, better housemaids. No woman—such is the constant complaint heard from their old friends by recently married men—can make tea. The most successful dressmaker of the day is a man. Even, therefore, in your own special arts men beat you hollow. How inconsistent with fact the theory that women could wrest from men any of the employments obviously more appropriate to the stronger and harder sex! How impossible, except where labour is so scarce that even inferior labour commands a high price, that women should generally earn for themselves a living they would not gladly renounce for that which men can easily earn for them and are willing to give them.”

There was a pause. Mrs. Dalway did not seem to have an answer ready, and Gerard, I fancy, was considering carefully how much of Cleveland's reasonings and facts he felt compelled to accept. After a minute's silence, therefore, Cleveland resumed.

“There is another point familiar to men who have seen much of women's work that well deserves your attention. All overworked persons, especially where the overwork is that of the brain, are apt to be irritable. But not merely overworked women, but most ordinary women charged with masculine responsibilities, and nearly all true women who work in quasi-masculine fashion, especially if they work out of doors (I mean

to say elsewhere than in the sheltered privacy of their own homes), seem with few and dubious exceptions to become in the prime of life irritable to a degree that tasks to the uttermost men's patience and courtesy. Irritability is as a rule written in their faces, expressed in every tone and movement. I have scarcely ever seen a true woman earning her bread by real mental labour whose face did not display what hasty persons would call ill-temper, what observant physiologists pity most deeply as nervous irritability. God forbid that I should blame them for it; but I never look on one of these faces without feeling for the moment the contempt provoked by the Woodhulls, the Blackwells, *et hoc genus*, boiling over into hatred and wrath, as I think that their presumptuous ignorance would impose on women in general the lot that has proved so hard in these exceptional cases; would render the soft, smooth, happy faces of wives and daughters as care-worn, repulsive, indicative of physical and mental suffering, as those of the women who have neither husband nor father to shield them from that wear and tear of anxiety and toil which their nerves are so unfit to endure."

"I think you are quite wrong on the last point," said Mrs. Dalway. "I have known well one or two celebrated and very industrious lady writers, and have seen many; and very few of their faces bear the character of which you speak. So far as their private life is known they seem to have quite as comfortable and even tempers as any of what I think I have heard you call the 'irritable race of authors.'"

"True," said Cleveland. "But these are not the

female labourers of whom I was thinking. Most of the class you mean belong to that exceptional type of women with masculine brains, who are in mental and nervous constitution epicene; and few of them have gone through that hard long struggle for existence which is the common experience of men. It is this especially that I affirm to be too severe for the strength of women. Of ordinarily clever women, and still more of women who are not clever, I think that an overwhelming majority, when forced to earn their bread by trying mental labour and to face the world alone, do show the symptoms of overstrained brain and nerves whereof I speak."

"Many of them, certainly," said Gerard. "But the over-eager brain-labour characteristic of the present generation is due by your own account in great measure to the extravagance of women. If this be the case, that extravagance is attributable to their training, deficient as it too often leaves them in intellectual tastes and devoid of all higher interests and employments; and this would cease when once they were educated as well as men are. Moreover, I hope that those foolish habits of ostentation and extravagant living in both sexes, which now oblige all men who cannot emancipate themselves from the tyranny of class-usages to overwork themselves so terribly, are a mere momentary phase of social folly, and will pass away long before the equality of the sexes is practically attained. Then men will be able to live without overwork, and women to earn their own bread without over-taxing their strength. Moreover you must remember, as concerning the competition of women in the labour market with men, that

women will never as a rule have to earn the bread of a family. It will be enough if they can support themselves; so that, if they do half the work and earn half the wages of the other sex, they will still be independent and able to make their own terms with those men who desire their society."

"Possibly," said Cleveland. "I am content if you see that the equality of men and women is incompatible with the existing character of female intelligence, and with the existing fundamental arrangements of society; and ought not to be attempted until you have accomplished a social and educational revolution almost as great as that which would be necessary to bring Communism within the range of practical possibilities. What may be possible when man has taken the control of human nature and of the world at large out of the hands of its Creator, and remoulded it according to his own ideas, I do not care to enquire."

At this point the ladies left us, and we adjourned to the smoking-room, which, as I have said, occupied one of the corner turrets that alone rose above the ground-floor of Cleveland's eccentric dwelling.

END OF VOL. I.

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THE
DEVIL'S ADVOCATE.

BY
PERCY GREG,
AUTHOR OF "INTERLEAVES."

" Knowledge comes but Wisdom lingers ; and I linger on the shore,
And the Individual withers, and the World is more and more.

Knowledge comes but Wisdom lingers ; and he bears a laden breast
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest."
TENNYSON'S *Locksley Hall*.

VOL. II.

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1878.

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THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE.

CHAPTER XI.

STATISTICS OF SEX.

"I AM a little surprised," said Gerard, "by what seems to me an inconsistency in your views. Of all men I know you have most thoroughly the courage of your opinions; and do not hesitate at conclusions which would stagger thinkers calling themselves advanced, when such conclusions rest logically on what you think indisputable premises. But if your arguments are correct, they seem to me to indicate polygamy not merely as a probable consequence of female emancipation but as the natural remedy for that excess in the number of women from which you apprehend their practical enslavement. You have always said that for ordinary men and women celibacy is an unnatural and injurious condition. Statistics certainly bear you out in this view, seeing that the mortality among the unmarried, especially in our own sex, exceeds considerably, at almost every age after the usual period of marriage, that of married people. Yet you seem to regard polygamy not as a practical remedy for a

very perceptible evil, but as a bugbear to frighten both men and women from the direction which the progress of thought and legislation has recently taken."

"You hardly treat my argument fairly," said Cleveland. "I did not trouble myself to consider in that argument whether polygamy were in fact good or evil. I *used* it as what you call a bugbear to the advocates of woman's rights, because it is more antagonistic to their feelings and views than even to those of the rest of their sex. They have of course a special repugnance to a system which must place women in an invidious and visible subordination to men, however obviously and directly it follows from their proposals. But as matter of fact the existing order of society rests on two principal pillars—property and the family. Strike away either of these, and the present edifice comes to the ground with a crash. There are, I know, some people who would not be restrained by any fear of practical consequences from carrying out to the test of results any destructive theory that fascinated their imagination or laid hold of their logical faculties. But I have no sort of sympathy and very little tolerance for theories purely negative in speculation and anarchical if reduced to practice. It seems to me an absolutely sufficient answer to any argument not merely abstract, but applied to the actual world of men and women, that it would undermine or overthrow the existing fabric of human civilized society; unless it can at the same time show how and on what foundation a new, better, and at least equally stable edifice can be constructed. That is, if not my sole, yet my principal objection to polygamy."

“But,” said Gerard, “there are still existing and have been in all ages societies, often very powerful, founded on or admitting of polygamy; and even granting that these are greatly inferior to our Aryan civilized communities (and if this be so now, they were highly civilized when we were semi-barbarous), I do not see that polygamy has much to do with their inferiority. The strongest form of the family, the one bound together by the closest, firmest and most permanent ties, is of the patriarchal type; and to that type polygamy is, if not essential, yet certainly natural. Abraham is a fair, whether a real or fictitious, representative of that patriarchal organization out of which the older civilized empires probably grew; and Abraham, like all Eastern chiefs from his day to the present, was a polygamist.”

“In a certain sense, yes,” said Cleveland. “The wife was in the patriarchal household evidently an important personage; and therefore, even if we had no other proof of the fact, we must assume that there was a wide distinction between the wife and the concubine.”

“You forget the household of Jacob,” answered Gerard, “and I fancy the household of Jacob more resembles the ordinary patriarchal type than that of Abraham.”

“You may be right,” answered Cleveland, “though I doubt whether a female head of the inner household be not almost as necessary to that type as a despotic male chief of the family, immediately directing its outdoor action in peace and war, and ultimately of course supreme over all its members. But it is worth noting

that in history the strongest States have generally been monogamic. I mean that the monogamic States have in the end proved proportionately stronger, and have overthrown and survived those in which polygamy was a habit. This may be, and probably is, due rather to coincidence than to causal connection. It was not because the Greeks and Romans were monogamists that they defeated and finally absorbed under their dominion, political or intellectual, the polygamic States of the East. It was because monogamy has been from the earliest ages, whether in the stricter or laxer form, the practice of the stronger and better-organized races; especially of that Aryan race which, on the whole, has always surpassed its rivals in vitality and in force. But the very fact that a practice so unpleasant to the ruder man, and involving so strong a restraint on the desires of the law-making ruling sex, has prevailed so long and so generally among the highest race of mankind and is found in nearly all its separate families, is a very strong argument in favour of that practice—tends to show that it alone harmonizes with the clearest, simplest, most permanent interests, and with the soundest political if not personal instincts of the higher species of humanity.”

“Are you quite right,” inquired Gerard, “in saying that monogamy is so distinctive and general a practice of the Aryan race? The ruling castes of India are, or were for a very long period, of Aryan blood; yet polygamy has been since the dawn of history their established habit. The Persians also were surely Aryans and polygamists. In the Homeric family the

concubine is almost as strongly-rooted an institution as the wife. The later Greeks appear to have been legally monogamists; but when they sought anything like intellectual companionship or true and equal affection among women, they sought it in the society of hetæræ; and, as you know, the deepest and most passionate love that finds frequent expression in later Greek poetry is of a kind more utterly incompatible with all domestic affection and conjugal respect between the sexes than the worst forms of polygamy."

"True," said Cleveland. "There must have been something utterly unsatisfactory to human instincts in the domestic relations when Socratic philosophy and Ionic poetry could be so deeply tainted by the same vice; and when that vice could serve the former as an illustration of the highest moral relations. Probably the Greek women, except in Sparta, were so wanting in the few moral and many intellectual merits which redeemed for one or two centuries the character of the men that the personal attachment which alone can render strict monogamy permanently tolerable was impossible. But as regards the Eastern Aryans it is easy to see how through the first tolerated infraction of monogamy, Homeric concubinage, polygamy grew up. Under any but the highest and most recent civilization war is frequent and involves the slavery of all captives not slaughtered. With all their pride in their common Hellenic ancestry, the Greeks enslaved one another; and Kallikratidas seems to have been the only Hellen who was sincerely ashamed of the practice. Female slaves, not belonging to a visibly distinct and inferior race like the negroes, are pretty

sure to become concubines. But concubinage is rather a relaxation of monogamy than a form of polygamy. In the earlier days of Gothic and Germanic Christianity the chiefs insisted on their right to concubines if not to extra wives; but monogamy has always been the rule in European households, and concubinage an exceptional license, generally though not always dependent on slavery. There has always been one wife with a recognized position, and her children have had the first if not the sole right of succession and inheritance. The introduction of polygamy proper among the Aryan conquerors of India I should be inclined, in the absence of historic evidence, to ascribe to similar causes. Probably the invaders, like many conquering races, had few women with them; and, taking women of the conquered tribes, did not respect them enough to make them wives in the old monogamic sense. The privilege of true wifehood might naturally seem the exclusive right of Aryan women. As to Persia, I cannot tell. The same cause may possibly have operated there. Or perhaps—if the institution of caste, forbidding if not from the first yet for many ages intermarriage between the Aryan priests and warriors and non-Aryan peasants and artisans, be thought to render the former suggestion improbable—the manners of the enormous majority of the races around and beneath them may have gradually infected the few Aryan conquerors. The ready acceptance of concubinage by Semitic and in some cases by Aryan women may be traceable to the existence or surviving tradition of that desire for numerous male offspring which must always prevail when, as under the oldest patriarchal system,

families are separate and self-dependent, and when consequently every male child born to the chief is an addition to the permanent and certain strength of the clan. Again, the earliest empires were non-Aryan. At a time when as yet no Aryan family seems to have emerged from barbarism the Assyrian and Egyptian empires had become great, refined, and rich. There was no morality sufficiently strict to restrain chiefs and princes from doing much as they pleased with their own; and polygamy once introduced into the household of the king and into those of his highest nobles would gradually spread downward. It can hardly have been the rule among the populace, because neither the means of the peasant nor the comparative numbers of the sexes would permit it to become general. Again, constant war as waged by Assyria, and often by Egypt must have introduced a double tendency to polygamy. First, as I have remarked and as is obvious to every one, female captives became concubines. But again widows and orphans were probably, even in the most civilized condition of these empires, very helpless. Unless restrained by superstitious customs as stringent as those of the Brahmin code, the widow would marry again, were it only for protection. Now constant war might—probably did—cut off in the flower of their age so large a proportion of the male population—especially of the free fighting men, who formed in all likelihood a primitive sort of aristocracy—as seriously to disturb the proportion of the sexes and make polygamy a necessity to women in days when permanent celibacy was not a possible or recognized status in any case but that of vestal priestesses,

generally few in number. Hence we find, in so far as we can trace the facts, that polygamy takes a much larger development in Semitic empires than among the patriarchs. There is no longer the distinction between wife and concubine, and princes have not two or three but scores of wives. In certain conditions, again, the interest of the nation would impose polygamy at least upon the king. I do not feel able to express a confident judgment on Mr. Froude's excuse for Henry VIII.; but am inclined to believe it, if not false, monstrously exaggerated. Nevertheless, the whole history of the time shows how deep was the impression produced on the English mind by the dynastic War of the Roses. The people evidently felt that the birth of a legitimate and direct male heir to the throne was of paramount importance to the country; and if no such feeling entered largely into the motives of Henry VIII., it is obvious that under other but similar circumstances a nation might easily learn to regard polygamy in the Royal House as a national necessity; though in the long run it proved the source of those very civil wars and dynastic feuds which it was perhaps in the first instance meant to avert by insuring as far as possible the existence of several children of the reigning prince, and so promising to prevent at once the failure of the dynasty and the rebellion of collateral heirs. For many a king would distrust any heir but his own son. He would therefore be anxious to insure that no single accident, such as the barrenness of the wife, or the removal by disease or accident of her one or two sons, should leave him with no other heir than an ambitious brother or cousin who might snatch at

any opportunity to hasten his own accession. We can thus see a variety of causes which might gradually introduce polygamy among races originally monogamic, as the Aryan race certainly seems to have been. M'Clennan, and other writers on prehistoric antiquity, have shown that the practice of female infanticide among tribes utterly improvident for the morrow, which only felt that every child not capable of becoming a warrior was for the time and would never add to their immediate strength, led to polyandry; an institution obviously most antipathetic to human instincts. The causes I have enumerated might equally account for the introduction of polygamy among civilized or semi-civilized peoples."

"Why," inquired Dalway, "do you speak of polyandry as so antipathetic to human instincts? Is it any more so than polygamy?"

"Certainly!" returned Cleveland. "You have polyandry among the lowest classes of animals, fish and insects, but never among the higher. The birds are, with many exceptions, generally monogamic. But the higher animals are as a rule polygamists, and those most nearly related to mankind appear generally to adopt a sort of patriarchal system. Among mammalian animals living in freedom and not unsocial, the general organization is clearly patriarchal. One supreme male by right almost always of superior strength assembles round him a herd of females and young whom he rules despotically, and whom he will allow no other adult male to approach. The Darwinian theory, then, which derives Man from the higher animals, is absolutely fatal to the idea that monogamy—much less polyandry

—could be a natural deeply-rooted instinct of the half-developed aboriginal man. That imperfectly-metamorphosed ape was in all likelihood a polygamist, certainly ready to become such. Polyandry I believe in spite of M'Clennan to have been a rare and exceptional phenomenon confined to the lowest or most famine-pressed of savages. The surviving usages—apparently much exaggerated—that indicate a former practice of capturing wives may surely be sufficiently accounted for by the prevalence of war and the universal custom of making concubines or wives of female prisoners. We may observe, moreover, that among patriarchally organized races, as soon as the natural objections to consanguineous marriage were recognized, wives could only have been obtained by capture or purchase since all the free members of a single clan must have been closely related. It seems then far more likely that the great majority of existing races descend from patriarchal polygamists and have developed their organization out of patriarchal institutions, than that they descended from a primeval ancestry, including most of the then existing human stocks, among whom a custom so unnatural as polyandry, and owing its existence to so artificial and exceptional a practice as that of female infanticide, must be supposed on M'Clennan's theory to have extensively if not universally prevailed."

"Well then," said Gerard, "you seem to hold that monogamy is at best no instinct of man but a conviction produced by experience which among the highest of human races has in the lapse of ages developed not indeed into an instinct properly so called, but into an

innate idea of race, with so powerful a hold on the Aryan mind that nearly all Aryan political and religious systems soon adopted it."

"Yes," answered Cleveland. "That is though a very vague a tolerably correct statement of my impression; and you may note that the Aryan races have actually contrived to import monogamy into a Semitic religion which did not originally enforce it. There is no question whatever that the Mosaic legislation accepted polygamy as it accepted slavery, as one of those essential principles of human society which it never dreamed of contradicting, though it might here and there regulate or restrain their application. Consequently, though polygamy had become comparatively rare, perhaps altogether exceptional, among the Jews in the reign of Augustus, yet it was traditionally recognized as a legitimate institution. Therefore, had it appeared to Christ that such a relation was essentially immoral, He would certainly have forbidden it—not, as some ingenious commentators and the Church at large allege Him to have forbidden it, by vague implication, but clearly and positively. Since, though He is alleged to have uttered some definite precepts about marriage and its duties, He never alluded to polygamy, it seems if not certain yet by far the more probable belief that He regarded it as a legitimate form of marriage. None of the texts commonly quoted on the subject at all resemble the language of a religious teacher who intended to forbid the cohabitation of one man with many women as inherently sinful. Yet at a very early period the Aryan races which embraced Christianity imposed on

it, imported into it, their own monogamic theory; just as in the present century Protestants have imported into it their very recently-developed hatred of slavery. The Master never said a word against either the one or the other; and Paul distinctly recognized slavery not only as a permissible arrangement but as one binding on the slave, since he sent a bondsman back to his master. How little Christ had to do with modern Christianity is not more clearly shown by doctrines regarding His own person which would have seemed to Him the most horrible blasphemy, than by the manner in which Christian Churches and missionaries from the days of St. Olaf to the present have insisted, as the primary condition of admittance to the Church, that their converts should dismiss, often to starvation or adultery, all wives but one; whereas their Master never said one word upon the subject, and, so far as we can draw legitimate inferences from what He did say, He would have indignantly repudiated so cruel a wrong, so outrageous an affront to the kindest instincts of unregenerate human nature."

"I have not studied Theology at all," said Gerard, "and am ashamed to say that, while your interpretation of the New Testament doctrine startles me as something utterly new, I cannot recall a single text that seems definitely or directly to contradict it."

"Surely," said Dalway, "it is contradicted, if not in so many words yet in principle, by the fact that our Lord applies His rebukes of adultery to both sexes alike. Now if it be adultery in the wife to admit a second partner, it must be, on Christian principles, equally adulterous in the husband."

“Possibly on Christian principles,” said Cleveland: “certainly not on those of Christ. It is the ignorance and presumption of mediæval churchmen and their modern pupils and imitators that has perverted Christ’s teaching on this subject. He never attempted to define the meaning of adultery. But the confusion you share as to the sense of that word is due to the fact that His teachings are recorded in Greek, and that the Greek language has no word technically answering to ours. Adultery means properly and solely the infidelity of a wife or the violation of a husband’s rights by the partner of her sin. No man can commit adultery with an unmarried woman.”

“Like Gerard,” said Dalway, “I am no theologian; but I think I remember two texts that conflict with your view.”

“I remember them well,” said Cleveland. “The first in Greek runs thus:—‘He who looketh after a woman to lust after her hath in his heart debauched her.’ The second, ‘He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone,’ might without straining the language so much as your interpretation strains it, be taken to mean ‘he who has not sinned in one way or another.’ What I presume it did mean was ‘he who has not yielded to the same class of temptation.’ Certainly we have no right to force upon it the meaning ‘he who is not an adulterer.’ Had it been so understood, the bystanders could hardly have been convicted so unanimously by their own hearts; for there must have been among them many who, whatever their sins, were innocent of that invasion of a neighbour’s domestic rights which alone they

would have recognized as constituting the crime in question. The woman, observe, was condemned to death by the law of Moses. That law did not condemn a polygamist; it did not so condemn a profligate. It condemned to death only those who violated a husband's right. Therefore it is clear that only those Jews who had actually violated that right would have considered themselves as falling under the same condemnation with the woman in question. It has always seemed to me that, beautiful as the story is, the thoroughly Aryan idea it involves—the idea of a reciprocal duty of exclusive fidelity between the sexes—shows that it came from the Church and not from her Founder; and confirms the doubts of its authenticity elicited by purely critical reasons, and by its absence from certain manuscripts.”

“Well then,” observed Gerard, “if polygamy be not antichristian or unnatural; if it be not forbidden either by revelation or by that instinctive morality which is binding on all men—because it was either implanted by their Creator or is an essential part of their better nature and indispensable to its support and development—your arguments against it seem to me very feeble. Monogamy in the present state of society is the cause of infinite misery to women. It condemns hundreds of thousands to unnatural celibacy, and thousands to a life of such degradation as only women can reach—*corruptio optimi pessima*—when they have forfeited the peculiar honour and purity of womanhood.

‘For men at most differ as Heaven and Earth,
But women, worst and best, as Heaven and Hell.’

There are, as we all know, in this country far more women than men ; and this fact alone would seem to indicate polygamy as the proper and only natural remedy."

"Take care," said Cleveland. "You may strain that argument very much too far. The major part of the mere numerical excess of women, perhaps in most old countries, certainly where emigration prevails, and especially in England, is unnatural. It is chiefly due to that emigration, and to disorganized emigration. If we sent to Australia, Canada, and the newer States of America the women who are deficient there, the numerical excess here would not much exceed 8 or 10 per cent."

"As you said," said Gerard, "that a permanent excess of 5 per cent. would 'bring down the price indefinitely, it would suffice to justify my doubts as to the natural remedy. To apply your own argument, a very small extra supply where the demand does not increase in proportion to cheapness sends down the price of an article most seriously ; and an overplus of women though it only amount to 8 per cent. may suffice to place the whole sex at a serious disadvantage ; if only by keeping down wages, and keeping up that social evil which aggravates again to an enormous extent all the difficulties and hardships that fall on the sex by enabling so large a number of men to dispense with marriage, while making no sacrifice of natural desires. But putting all this aside, your 8 per cent. are not properly provided for even when you have given them the means of earning their bread comfortably and without overwork. We agree

that celibacy is to women especially an unnatural and unwholesome state. Ought we not then to give these 8 per cent. the opportunity of marriage? yet only polygamy can do that."

"But," said Dalway, "in making one woman out of twelve as happy as she could be in a harem you sacrifice the higher happiness of the other eleven. In order that one woman may not be celibate, you turn eleven wives into concubines and slaves."

"I should," said Gerard, very slowly and sadly, "I should give more weight to that argument if marriage were in most cases what it is in a very few; a real permanent profound union of hearts as well as of lives and fortunes. But not one marriage in twenty is or ever will be such. Therefore I think that in all probability the abhorrence of Aryan women for polygamy is mere matter of habit and education; and that the sacrifice involved in the abandonment of monogamy is rather imaginary than real. Looking at the matter logically, as one of pure calculation and reasoning, and setting aside our habits of thought and our personal feelings, I am inclined to think that the abolition of the great social evil and full provision for the excess of women would be worth the sacrifice of anything which women in general owe to our monogamic laws. You must remember that, whatever theory may have to say, the numerical excess of women does not measure their redundancy. In practice from one cause or another one-fourth of our women under the monogamic law never marry at all; and so long as there remains an excess of women from whatever cause unmarried, sufficient to feed the class of *filles perdues*, so long, though

you should export to the colonies all the women wanting there, would you still have, say, one in four educated ladies, and one in six of all ranks condemned to lifelong celibacy. This fact alone seems to me to indicate, on the low ground we have taken, that polygamy is the only sufficient corrective, providing as it would homes for all our women."

"You forget," said Cleveland, "a pointed and most telling criticism on 'the greatest happiness principle' of the Benthamite system—or rather on the ordinary method of applying it—indicating a condition that always should be and never is remembered when that principle is appealed to by utilitarians or democrats. You must consider 'not only the greatest number but the greatest happiness;' not only the extent but the degree. Now the happiness of the few marriages you admit to be happy may be in intensity sufficient to outweigh the trivial advantages that you think might arise in a million cases from giving women now celibate by compulsion the opportunity of marriages of convenience. Granting that the advantages of polygamy would justify the sacrifice of whatever benefit accrues to women from this sort of monogamic marriage—and even this I cannot admit—the sacrifice of that true happiness which exists in a few homes and serves as a standard for all would be a terrible price to pay for the gain, estimate it as highly as you will, of finding women at present celibate a place in polygamic harems."

"True," said Gerard, "and no one can feel that more deeply than I do. But that happiness when it does or can exist will never be put in peril by any law

that the State can make, as it owes nothing to any law and needs no protection from any power outside itself. No one proposes that men should be *forced* to take more wives than one; and in none of the few homes of which we are thinking would the desire or dream of polygamy ever intrude. The question, then, lies simply between the present state of society outside these homes,—that is, between a score of houses filled with quarrel and vexation where the men would be thankful to get rid of their partners (but for the restraint imposed on their acts by law or opinion and on their thoughts by the habit of ages), with five unmarried women for each dozen of such homes—and the inclusion in each dozen of two harems which would absorb the superfluous and now celibate women. Moreover, it is just possible that polygamy might have a healthy effect on women in general, if your estimate of their present character be at all a fair one. Clearly, wherever there were two wives, each would have constant and urgent motive to do her best to please her husband, if only from jealousy of her rival; and the possibility of polygamy would bind over the first wives, while they remained without rivals, in very heavy penalties to keep the peace with their tongues and to abstain from all the faults you impute to them. I am therefore a little surprised to find that your usual consistency does not carry you far enough to approve of a system apparently sanctioned by nature in her provision of an excess of women, and certainly calculated to put down those aspirations to or assertions of equality, and those habits of petulance and extravagance for

which justly or unjustly you have so sharply censured the women of the present generation."

"I grant," answered Cleveland, "that polygamy would serve as a rod wherewith to correct most of those faults; but the rod is, in the first place, too heavy to satisfy my conscience. No man of even temper wishes *scutica dignam horribili sectare flagello*; and it is only on a few clamorous and pushing platform Mænads, to whom a more than masculine notoriety is not repulsive but agreeable, that I could bear to use the scourge you propose to put into the hands of our sex. Next—even did I not make much allowance for all feminine errors on account of the nervous susceptibility and intellectual weakness of the sex—even if I thought that they had deserved, whether in polygamy or in such total abolition of marriage as would follow from the concession of sexual equality, the punishment some of them are trying to draw upon themselves—I should object to polygamy in the interest not only of future generations, not only of the women, but of the living generation of men themselves. Abolitionists have often said that slavery is more injurious to the master than to the slave. I doubt it, for the finest races of the world were till very lately slave-owners. But to live constantly and chiefly in the society of slaves, to have intimate domestic relations with slaves and with slaves alone, to have no intercourse with equals or quasi-equals at all approaching in frequency or confidence to that held with slaves, would suffice I think to ruin the best qualities even of superior men. To the character of the average man such conditions would certainly be fatal. Now polygamy makes the women of the harem virtually mere

slaves, and the worst kind of slaves—slaves of the master's passions and caprices, not of his rational interests; slaves who will never be kept under steady equal discipline, but petted to-day and punished to-morrow with very little regard to their merits in either case. I should not myself object to be a slave-owner, in charge of men and women of an inferior race, born to and fitted for strict subordination to those whom the Creator has made visibly and vastly their superiors. I hold that all authority, limited or absolute, public or domestic, is a trust which the owner is bound to use not for his own gratification but for the benefit of those he has to govern; and this deep conviction would I hope protect me from all temptation to abuse such power. But—while women are intellectually inferior, and morally as well as mentally and bodily weaker than men, and need guidance and control—they are not so widely, so palpably and *unquestionably* inferior to men of the same race that they should be treated like negroes. Unless they themselves felt and admitted their inferiority as instinctively as negroes naturally do, they would be disaffected and rebellious slaves: and nothing could be more unpleasant to the higher manly spirit or more injurious to character than to be the master of reluctant, disloyal, recalcitrant slaves. Nor could I without grave doubt and much reluctance consent to reduce to slavery any class of persons actually free, even though I thought their freedom a mistake. Above all, I decline to give to a slave that kind of hold upon my affection, that kind of influence on my conduct, which even a concubine who has won her owner's regard, liking or mere instinctive attachment, necessarily

possesses. And, finally, I decline to have my children educated in the first years of their life by slaves. I decline to have my sons associated intimately, for the first ten years of their existence, with sisters who, as they would soon learn, are destined to be the mere toys and play-things of their male acquaintance and play-fellows."

"Now," said Dalway, "I am almost as much puzzled as Gerard by your inconsistency. It is not long since I heard you insist as energetically as any Arab patriarch, Roman patrician, or savage chief could have done on the subordination of women; and now you denounce polygamy, because it would enforce that subordination effectually, with almost as much of indignant eloquence as Mrs. Woodhull herself could exert on so congenial a topic."

"If," said Cleveland, "you cannot understand the difference between subordination and slavery, you deserve to pass half-a-dozen years as a bondsman on a Cuban plantation, and another half-dozen as a subaltern in an English regiment. The slave practically exists for the sake of his master. The chief exists for the sake of his subordinates, or both for the welfare of the community to which they both belong. The women of the seraglio exist simply for the gratification of their master's passions; and deeper degradation is hardly possible to human nature. Subordination involves no loss of personal dignity, no matter how absolute the obedience required. The great radical mistake, lying at the root of half the declamation of strong-minded women about the wrongs of their sex, consists in this very confusion. When they are told that wives should

obey, they cry out that wives are in that case slaves. I say in reply that if a wife obeys like a slave she does not, even in the matter of obedience, perform half her duty. She should obey not as a slave, with unwilling or indolent hands and feet, but with heart and intelligence. She should carry out her husband's wishes as a conscientious and loyal officer carries out those of his Colonel or General, even when he sees that those orders are sending him to death, and firmly believes that they will involve the defeat of the army. If, despite his own convictions and wishes, such an officer do not use the utmost power of his faculties to carry out those orders as intelligently and energetically as if they were of his own devising, he merits degradation if not death. Again, much more than an officer and utterly unlike a slave, the wife, if she deserve it and is fit for it, is sure to be her husband's counsellor. Unless, one or the other be a fool, about everything in which she has to act, to obey otherwise than passively, she is sure to have been consulted. If not, it is generally because she cannot express a difference of opinion becomingly. It is her duty therefore sometimes to render an obedience much more difficult than that of a slave; the obedience of one whose wishes and opinions on the subject have been heard and overruled. It is from intelligent loyal and intimate subordinates, not from slaves, that we can expect such conscientious, active support. Finally, a subordinate is on the whole personally and socially on familiar and more or less equal terms: a slave is or is supposed to be essentially necessarily incurably inferior, unfit to be an associate, incapable of being a friend. The Colonel and the

Patriarchal Polygamy v. Average Monogamy. 23

subaltern meet at the mess-table as equals ; the master and the slave can never do so. When therefore it is proposed to degrade women by the institution of polygamy, those who insist most distinctly on conjugal subordination are precisely those who in consistency are bound to object most strongly to the innovation which, by turning English helpmates into Eastern 'favourites,' gives us the passive physical submission of a slave in exchange for what should be the willing co-operation of the wife ; a co-operation even more close and loyal than the intelligent obedience of a subaltern officer to his chief or a Minister to his Sovereign."

"It seems to me," said Gerard, "that you make a double mistake in that argument, keenly as it appeals to feelings I do not care to recall. You take monogamy at its very best, such as it is in one home out of five hundred. You take polygamy at its worst, such as it is in the harem of a Sultan or a sensual and wealthy Pacha, where the master scarcely knows all his concubines by sight and certainly knows nothing of the personal character of each ; where he can, save by a rare accident, have no sympathy or confidence for any. You ought in fairness to compare average Aryan monogamic homes with those in which Semitic or Turanian husbands have two or three wives, with all of whom they are in daily familiar intercourse of mind and heart, and who are really companions and not slaves. Practically, as you know, not one English wife in hundreds is now-a-days the loyal, willing, obedient minister you describe. Even in days when the marriage vow of obedience was regarded as a reality,

formally recognized and openly accepted, and when a wife would have been almost as much ashamed of public and formal disobedience as of avowed unchastity, there was little of that loyal subordinate co-operation which you have put forward as the type of the monogamic relation. Women, as educated and treated hitherto, are as a rule too irritable, too petulant, too blind to the logical and practical consequences of their conduct, to be capable of that steady faithful energetic execution of plans they disapprove, the example of which you correctly seek in the ranks of disciplined armies. If educated as free equal independent beings, they will of course refuse such submission. If they are to be kept in that subordination which you recommend and I repudiate, it must be (in the enormous majority of cases) by treatment and by appealing to motives which would really render them slaves. Now, if they are to be slaves, Oriental polygamy has the advantage in this essential respect that, the slavery being obvious and almost avowed, the slaves are *not* rebellious. To a husband holding and acting on your view at the present day nine English wives in ten would be, even if submissive, certainly resentful and reluctant subordinates. Now where resentment and rebellion come in—where the slave would break away from the yoke if he could—there you have yourself declared that slavery is thoroughly bad for both parties. But you take your type of conjugal subordination from a few exceptional cases; as you take your examples of slavery, I doubt not, from the equally exceptional instances of domestic and hereditary servitude. If you are to justify slavery not as it exists

in semi-patriarchal households, but as it existed or still exists under Aryan rule, you must take as your standard the gang of plantation slaves—half of whom are purchased, and neither care for nor perhaps know their master. If you wish to make a fair comparison between polygamy and monogamy you must take—not the theoretical perfection of wifedom as against the worst abuses of the seraglio but—the ordinary European home with its contentions and contradictions, as compared with the Arab tent or the home of an ordinary Indian or Turkish gentleman of moderate means. Unfortunately we know very little of these last. But all that has been said and written about the practical evils of polygamy is true of—is avowedly drawn from—the great seraglios alone. If you want a parallel for these in monogamy, take in common justice the worst class of monogamic homes. Take those of the French idle classes, where it would seem, if the best French novels give a true picture of Parisian life, that scarce one wife in five is faithful; or the homes of the more brutal of English labourers and artisans, where subordination or slavery is enforced by the poker—more frequently used, I believe, and certainly a worse instrument of rule, than the Turkish pipe-stick—and where murder is more frequent than there is any reason to suppose it even in the largest and therefore the worst class of Oriental seraglios. Lady Duff-Gordon is one of the very few English writers who has seen anything of the interior of ordinary Oriental life. Her testimony shows that among the middle and lower classes polygamy chiefly operates as a compensation for that excess in number

of women on which alone I suppose a reasonable man would base an argument in its favour. The men take a second wife very generally because she has to be provided for in some way and because marriage is the best and simplest way of meeting the necessity. If you insist that women ought not to be to a large extent bread-winners and independent of men, you must assume that every third English household should contain permanently two women to one man. Among the richer classes the proportion would as you know be larger, since the number of celibate women among them is far greater than twenty-five per cent. When once this comes, should it ever come, to be a common rule, your arguments in favour of monogamy, and all arguments derived from considerations of domestic peace, fall to the ground. If we are to see generally two or more adult women in a family I suspect that family life would go on more smoothly and peacefully if all were wives."

"There is something new, and perhaps something true," answered Cleveland, "in that view of the subject. I must admit of course that the existing state of English society, with its twenty-five per cent. of celibate women among the population generally, and probably forty per cent. among the educated classes, is thoroughly wrong. If monogamy is to be retained and justified as the only arrangement compatible with the higher civilization, this state of things must come to an end. You are entitled then, as the Devil's Advocate in this argument, to claim that I as a defender of monogamy should show how we are to provide for these women without retaining either

prostitution or extensive out-of-door and therefore unsuitable employment of women, or probably both. I must grant that polygamy does provide for them. The most obvious alternative is of course that they should be maintained by and in the homes of near married relations. If this be the only or the most likely method of providing for them you may possibly be right in saying that the best form for a family consisting of one man and several women is that in which the women are all wives."

"At any rate," said Dalway, "I think most men of experience will admit that English wives would be almost as jealous of unmarried women permanently settled in their homes as of rival wives."

"You were right," said Gerard, "in calling me the Devil's Advocate in this discussion. Of course I have no especial belief in the merits of polygamy—probably as little as you—though having seen more of Islam I like it better and do not recognize the force of your strongest argument against its 'peculiar institution.' I am no believer in the inherent superiority of race over race, and I think your own remark [that the earliest empires were not Aryan but Semitic or Hamitic] refutes the importance you would attach to Aryan instincts as those of a race essentially and not accidentally superior—the culminating type of humanity. What I do consider thoroughly wrong and illegitimate is the pretension of society or the law to dictate to men and women the terms on which they shall live together. Whether you be right or wrong in holding that such dictation is exercised chiefly in the interest of women, or again in the theory that it

necessarily involves their subordination as a condition of permanent union, I do not care to inquire. Unlike some advocates of Woman's Rights not more earnest than myself, I care equally for the liberties of either sex, and I insist that both should be permitted to associate on such terms as they mutually please, legal provision once made for the children. If polygamy be as you think a necessary or probable consequence of liberty, I am prepared to accept even polygamy; and I suppose that if the numbers of the sexes are permanently unequal, some form of polygamy is an almost inevitable consequence of the withdrawal of compulsion. But when you say that polygamy would enslave women you forget that I would give women perfect legal equality with men, and absolute freedom of divorce."

"No," said Cleveland. "I did not forget that: but I do not think it has any serious bearing on the position of women when once the protection given by law and custom to monogamy is withdrawn. The weaker sex would soon find out that they must submit or starve. Liberty of divorce would be at best merely the power of changing masters at will; and few women well advised would care to exercise such a power, since their first owner for obvious reasons would probably be kinder on the whole than any other. No doubt this power of change would put some check on gross physical cruelty to young and attractive women; but with this limitation I think that polygamy would be the same in character and effect, whatever the legal rights and status of women."

"Do you not," said Dalway, "overlook another

point? At present the large proportion of unmarried women is a very useful check on the increase of population; and the practical limit which nature seems to have set on the fertility of women is almost the one thing that renders marriage safe or prudent for any but men of fortune or mere labourers. If in practice every mother bore as many children as theoretically she might do, and as the creatures nearest in rank to men appear to do—that is to say, one child in each eighteen months from the age of twenty to that of forty-five—all men possessed of but limited means and anxious that their children should not sink below their own rank, would be deterred from marrying at anyrate till late in life. Now polygamy would abolish both the limit practically imposed by nature on the average family, and that which the celibacy of so great a proportion of our women places on the too rapid increase of the population at large. Would not even rich men be staggered at the thought of having to maintain not only six wives but, say, thirty children?"

"I think," said Cleveland, "though with some doubt, that the six wives certainly, and the thirty children probably might in the end cost less than the present much smaller family, because polygamy would degrade the position of women in their husbands' eyes so much that they would not be half so liberally treated as at present. I suspect that, plurality of wives being possible, it would be one of the favourite indulgences of rich men, to which they would divert the greater part of that which they now lay out on the lighter forms of intellectual pleasure or mere amusement, or expend in gratifying a wife or daughter's love of

elegance and ease. Do not fancy for a moment that the harem would be furnished like the drawing-room; or even that the children of a dozen concubines would be clothed, educated, and provided for like those of a single wife."

"As to the increase of population," said Gerard, "I believe that it is on the whole slower in polygamic than in monogamic countries."

"Yes," said Cleveland, "but this tells doubly against polygamy. The reason probably is, first that, the polygamic races being less civilized, the checks called by Malthus positive—war, misery, disease, nursery mismanagement—operate thrice as powerfully as among the higher monogamic races. Secondly, there is less care and interest in children on the part of the mothers; and they are I suspect the victims not unfrequently of absolute foul play."

"I doubt it," said Gerard. "I fancy our burial clubs are the cause of far more havoc among children than the jealousies of the seraglio; and all I have seen and read of Eastern peoples contradicts your supposition. They seem generally to be quite as careful of their children as we are, and more gentle and forbearing with them."

"But," rejoined Cleveland, "does not your experience and that of other travellers refer chiefly to those lower-class homes in which polygamy is the exception, and in which when practised it takes the least odious form? Men have no access to the interior of Oriental homes; and the very few women who have—excepting Lady Duff-Gordon—write such utter nonsense, and are so blinded by their prejudices or self-conceit, that their

testimony, were it tenfold fuller than it is, would have but little value."

"There is, however," said Gerard, "another point in favour of polygamy, or rather another way of regarding the question, which should not be left out of account. If we grant that the seraglio is a thoroughly vicious institution, it is, after all, far less vicious than its European counterpart. Where, the sexes being unequal in number, you forbid polygamy, you have what is called by an emphatic and very truthful euphemism the social evil. Set these two against each other, and the balance, I think, is in favour of polygamy. The majority of homes under whatever rule, monogamic or otherwise, are of much the same character, though my experience leads me to fancy that those of Asiatic polygamic races are on the whole happier than those of Europeans. Is it not worth while to solve the problem of the redundancy of women, with all its evils, at the price of giving every rich man a harem; seeing that practically, polygamy—except in providing for the numerical excess of women—scarcely affects the lives of the many."

"Unfortunately," answered Cleveland, "in most Oriental countries the rich are the only aristocracy, and their influence must tell greatly on the habits and ideas of the people. If polygamy demoralizes the households whose masters are the natural chiefs of a nation, it cannot but demoralize through them the nation as a whole."

"As a fact," replied Gerard, "the Oriental nations are not demoralized. They were three thousand years ago civilized, when the Aryan monogamists were univer-

sally savages. They retain to this day not a few of the simple manly virtues which do not flourish so generally in the hothouse atmosphere of a higher civilization."

"You have not touched," observed Dalway, "the physiological argument on which, according to certain sympathetic French reporters, the Mormon champions of polygamy lay so much stress."

"No," said Cleveland, "it is not an argument on which anything could ever turn. The practical evidence in its favour is drawn from animal rather than from human experience, and in such matters human and animal instincts differ vitally. Again, we know and the Mormons admit that their theory is no more consistent with womanly than with masculine feeling: and until practical proof of actual mischief from the existing and immemorial habits of mankind is forthcoming, it is hardly worth while to inquire whether, on abstract grounds, a change in those habits be desirable. . . . Assuredly, were polygamy legalized, not one polygamist in a hundred would *act* on the view in question, *i.e.*, would choose to take extra wives merely or chiefly to satisfy the requirements of a physiological doctrine so questionable; and were he, when married to several wives, to carry out that doctrine, nothing he could do would give rise to more bitter jealousy or more natural resentment. The wife, especially in polygamic families, regards childbirth as giving her a new and special claim on her husband's regard; and the claim evidently falls in with the man's own sense of the fitness of things. . . .

CHAPTER XII.

"MALTHUS WITHSTANDING."

HERE the discussion came to a pause, and then, lighting another cigar, Dalway spoke. "Neither of you," he said, "seems to care to deal with the effect of polygamy—not as actually practised in the East but as it might be practised in England—upon population. And surely, since the proportion of population to wealth is the paramount influence regulating the happiness or at least the material wellbeing of a country, this is a point that ought not to be left out of consideration in balancing the account."

"If," answered Cleveland, "we are to enter upon the question of population, it is to be hoped that the ladies will take longer in brushing their hair, or whatever *causerie* included under that phrase may answer to our *Tabaks-Parlement*, than I ever knew Ida do before. In that case I will give you a cigar I do not often produce here, because it takes at least an hour to finish one, and they are too good to be thrown away."

"I never go to bed early," said Gerard. "You two know best how many hours, at this time of night, you dare give to a discussion which, unless prematurely cut short, might well occupy us during a session as long as that memorable two-days' continuous sitting

by which the House of Commons accepted the challenge and daunted the courage of the Irish obstructives. But I should like to see my way a little more clearly through the mazes of that most perplexing problem. I am inclined to believe on the whole that polygamy would not very seriously affect the population. The great majority of men marry as early as they can, and could not afford to marry two wives. The classes now restrained from marriage by prudence would be still more effectively restrained from polygamy. A few rich men alone would have families very much larger than at present, and I fancy that the comparative simplicity of life which polygamy would be likely to induce—by destroying many of the motives which now lead to expenditure on luxury, social entertainment, and ostentation—would release resources more than sufficient to maintain the extra numbers.”

“Remember,” answered Cleveland, “that your extra number of children must be measured by the extra number of women who are to be married. After providing for the Colonies there would remain unmarried, in the present state of English society, something like one-fifth of the whole number of marriageable women. Your one telling effective plea in favour of polygamy is that it would provide for these. If, then, your argument in its favour be true, polygamy would involve an addition of some twenty per cent. to the annual number of births without increasing the proportion of infant deaths to births.”

“I am not quite sure of that,” said Gerard. “For some reason or other, certain it is that polygamic families are not numerous in proportion to the number of

wives. This may be no doubt partly due to the positive—I should call them destructive—checks we have all along borne in mind. But I incline to think that it is due, at least in part, to a comparative paucity of births; for which, were we to go closely into the details of the subject, it might not be difficult to account. I doubt whether the increase of births to be expected from the absorption in polygamic homes of twenty per cent. of our women at present unmarried would amount to more than say twelve per cent., and this in a population increasing so fast as that of England would not produce a very serious result.”

“Would it not?” said Cleveland. “The teachers on whose authority you rely much more than I do regard the increase of population with such terror that any addition to it in those European countries where population increases fastest in proportion to the extent of the soil, should seem to them and to their disciples a very grave matter indeed.”

“It is just because the increase is so rapid,” rejoined Gerard, “that I do not regard with alarm the possibility of a slight addition to the rate. Englishmen multiply so fast that vigorous measures are even now necessary, and must year after year be more essential, to prevent a plethora which would choke all the channels whereby the increase is healthfully absorbed, and a fuller subsistence than can be obtained in any other old country secured to our working classes. The drains by which the actual excess of population is carried off are so effective that wages steadily rise, indicating that for the moment at least wealth increases more rapidly than numbers. The energy and enterprise which keep our

capital up and our numbers down would suffice to meet just as completely the case of an additional percentage of twelve or twenty on the annual number of births."

"I thought," said Dalway, "that on this question you agreed, at all events in the main, with Stuart Mill?"

"Certainly," said Gerard. "On this as on most other topics, excepting some of his strictures on democracy, I am proud to have been the disciple of the finest intellect of his age. But you misapprehend my meaning. The increase of population in England is so tremendous a power or burden, call it what you will, that a small addition to it is of little moment. The channels by which it is for the present carried off into new or wider fields of employment are numerous and ample as so vast a growth requires, and would suffice for the disposal of any addition that polygamy could make. Should those channels be choked, the pressure at actual rates would at once become so tremendous, so overwhelming that such addition to it would again be of little consequence. Unless effectually met, it would overwhelm all our resources, and crush all barriers of law or force erected to protect them. It is precisely because that the problem is in itself so gigantic, the danger so grave, the force so irresistible, that any question of a little more or less seems trivial."

"But you admit," said Dalway, "that our population is not growing faster than our wealth? Emigration and the demand for English labour abroad do not prevent our population from increasing very rapidly at home; and yet that increasing population is constantly employed at higher wages. Moreover those wages are not only higher as estimated in gold, but pos-

sess on the whole a greater purchasing power than the mere nominal increase represents."

"Granted," returned Gerard. "But the enormous increase of our national wealth during the last half century is abnormal, almost miraculous; and the *rate* of progress due to the rapid extension of steam-power can hardly be sustained when all the principal developments whereof that force is capable have been brought to bear wherever applicable. In this we shared the gain common to all the civilized world, but ran ahead of our rivals by many years—during which of course our profits were utterly exceptional. Then again our coal and iron mines were so much better situate, better developed, more available, that as against Europe we had for some time a virtual monopoly of these; the essential material, the nutriment and instrument, of this novel all-revolutionizing motive-power. We could afford to 'launch out;' and unhappily, with the Many, the extraordinary benefits of Fortune or Providence were as usual expended in an increase of population which consumed not merely the income but the capital, so to speak, of the new productive power bestowed. So long as invention went on developing our resources faster than our population, wages as you say rose. But even in 1846-7 the Irish famine, caused by the failure of a single crop in one densely-peopled island, warned us what overpopulation might mean; and for some time past we have been forced to feel that meaning, if we do not yet understand it. We have lived for a decennium in large part upon the enormous nominal profit of foreign loans and investments; profit which we regarded as permanent income, but which was in fact

a part of the lent capital returned as interest or commission. The capital all expended the income came to an end, the borrowers having developed no new resources: we were thrown back upon our legitimate or *real* business; and at once we find that this is no longer sufficient to occupy or to sustain the vast permanent increase of population which prosperity has saddled on the soil and capital of the country. In brief, when railways were invented, and the power of the steam-engine in manufacture fully developed, we were placed in a position of vantage as compared with all competitors, which gave to our productive and distributive trade an impulse the like whereof has never been seen in the history of the world. At the same time we gained an immense start on all other countries in the acceptance of free trade. We have therefore for some thirty or forty years enjoyed opportunities of getting rich with extraordinary rapidity, such as never occurred to a people before and are very unlikely to occur again, at least in an old land whose resources have been fully explored and ascertained. This stupendous unparalleled multiplication of our wealth cannot possibly continue. It is I greatly fear committing suicide by exhausting the more accessible and cheaper stores of those minerals on which it depends. As sounder views of commercial policy pervade Europe, Continental countries will become formidable competitors. If they do not take from us any part of our present trade they will at least prevent its increase. As America becomes more fully peopled and abandons the suicidal policy of protection—after it has done its work for her by fostering her helpless infant manufactures—she

will gradually reach and outstrip us. The country east of the Mississippi alone possesses mineral resources infinitely greater than our own. These are as yet only touched or almost untouched because the attractions of a virgin soil and a favouring climate offered to agriculture advantages far greater than any that could attach to manufacturing on an extensive scale; and a true instinct, approved by all sound economists, spread the population over the surface of the land instead of concentrating it on mineral accumulations or factories erected in their vicinity. The rate at which our wealth long increased and still longer appeared to increase was therefore altogether unnatural and artificial, or, if you prefer the phrase, accidental and in its essence temporary. You may say that the multiplication of our numbers is equally abnormal and unprecedented. It has been stimulated and rendered possible by the extraordinary increase of our wealth. But if or when the rate of our enrichment, as I fear is now the case, is checked, and settles down to a normal and permanently maintainable average, the multiplication of our numbers will not similarly slacken. No form of expenditure is harder to control than the rate of human multiplication. The last thing that a people or a numerous class will consent to sacrifice is the privilege of marriage at the age and on the conditions to which they have been accustomed. A time must therefore come before very long, and might come at any moment, when the growth of our population will actually fulfil the Malthusian law, and outstrip the growth of our wealth; or rather when the latter will fall behind the former. Then the problem will become one of the most formidable with which political

philosophy or practical statesmanship has ever attempted to grapple. On the efficacy of the solution attempted will depend certainly the greatness and the national unity of England, possibly her very existence as a civilized community; for the people will not quietly consent to a gradual persistent decline in their comforts or style of living. Still less will they meet the evil for themselves by a prompt and rigorous restriction of their numbers, or at any rate by general abstinence from or postponement of marriage. We shall then have reached a point at which England can do no more than support her existing population, or at most a moderate increase thereof, such as we see in other European lands; while the actual increase of numbers will proceed at a rate almost American. History shows those who can read between the lines how tremendous is the social and even martial force which numbers outgrowing means have generated. It has swept away great empires; it has hurled vast hordes of men upon certain and visible destruction. Half the great wars of old are known, many more may well be thought, to have been produced by the mere impulse of famine or fear of famine, driving the wild races of the mountain and the forest down upon the civilized States of the open plain. Hence, no doubt, the successive waves of Aryan conquest that swept over Europe and India, and covered them with layer on layer of a superior race-element, as the Nile covers Egypt with repeated layers of fertilizing mud. Hence the Gallic inroads into Italy, age after age, from the first settlement of the Boii under the Alps to the final annihilation of the Cimbri and Teutones by Caius Marius. Hence the invasion of agricultural Europe by Tartar nomads.

Hence the puzzling succession of Southward movements in Africa; each hungry tribe sweeping away its next neighbour, and these again driving out the dwellers immediately south of their abandoned home: movements so unconcerted, yet so regular in their direction and result that they might seem to indicate the action of a social instinct like that of the swallow. This social motive power, like that of a lake long dammed up by an Alpine glacier, is almost superhuman in its destructive capacity. And unless the difficulty is perceived in time and met by effectual precautions—unless means are found of reconciling the then established rate of increase among our population with the maintenance by some means or other of the existing standard of comfort among the Many—that irresistible human earthquake or lava-tide, the pressure of population upon resources, will sweep away every barrier that law and morality have erected for the protection of private property; and that with a force, suddenness, and violence which will render the reconstruction of society on another basis impossible, or possible only after convulsions that will leave but scanty relics of all the wealth, knowledge, and refinement accumulated in the course of some 1800 years.”

“That,” said Dalway, “is a view I should have expected from Cleveland rather than from you. It agrees with some speculations he unfolded to us the other evening, but does not agree at all with that faith in the future of mankind you have always seemed to entertain.”

“I have no fears for the future of mankind,” replied Gerard. “There is no present possibility that the numbers of mankind at large should press closely on

the resources of the habitable earth. Before they can do so the human race will, I think, be much wiser and more far-sighted than it is at present. But the future of the human race and the future of any one country are two very different things; nay, the future of this isle of England may be utterly different from the future of the English nationality. I do not, however, seriously fear that England will come to grief in the manner of which I have spoken. I merely said that she would be in grievous danger *if*, when the recent rapid growth of her wealth shall be permanently checked, she shall not have made betimes wise and ample provision to prevent any signal and general falling-off in the well-being of her people. But I believe that such provision will be made. We see already where the practical remedy lies. As an imperial nation we possess, and may long continue to possess, areas of fertile soil practically illimitable, as yet almost untouched, capable of maintaining the utmost possible increase of our population for centuries to come; and all that we should need in the worst probable case would be a public provision for emigration on a very large scale."

"But," said Dalway, "you spoke of a possible check or choking of the channels by which our surplus population is at present carried off. Do you, then, anticipate any possible, even if not probable, check to emigration?"

"Yes," answered Gerard, "there is such a potential check. I do not think that it will come into operation; indeed, I regard such an occurrence as extremely improbable. But you are aware that the United States, owing chiefly to misgovernment, to the abuse of the rights of private property by great joint-stock companies

manipulated in the interests of a few dishonest men, and through a difficulty of diffusion which in such a country is hardly intelligible, have more than once found their population locally and temporarily redundant. Should this happen when the proletariat of the cities have become, as they perhaps will become, the ruling power, or snatch as a third party the momentary control of the States, it is quite possible that immigration might for a time at least be forbidden. Our own colonists in Australia are more ignorant and less reasonable on this point than the Americans have ever in practice shown themselves; and have already forgotten that their land by every title of law and justice belongs not to the few who have settled themselves there first but to the Empire at large; and we have heard among their working-classes talk of prohibitory legislation against the introduction even of English immigrants. Such ideas might take a practical and very dangerous shape if colonial wages were lowered by an extensive officially organized emigration from the mother country at the expense of the State. I hope that in such a case England would assert her right and compel the colonies to admit the equal interest of all their countrymen in the lands not yet appropriated by individuals, and in the resources of a new and thinly-peopled country. But at some future moment, when colonial population and colonial capital may be more nearly equalized than at present, such an attempt to restrain immigration is not inconceivable. I do not, however, think it sufficiently probable to be worth more than a passing notice in a discussion on the general question of population."

"But," said Dalway, "what of the countries that have no colonies, and whose people are, and probably will be for some generations to come, much less willing to emigrate than our own? Must not they be in danger of that tremendous convulsion which would, you say, befall England if emigration ceased to be practicable?"

"Not necessarily though not improbably," said Gerard. "England is the principal country which combines the density of population characteristic of an ancient community with the rapidity of multiplication proper to a young one. Nevertheless all the peoples nearest akin to our own show that the pressure of population on resources is felt, by the number of the emigrants they send forth, chiefly to the United States. Next to the Irish, Germany supplies the most important foreign element in their mixed population; and Scandinavian colonies are numerous and increasing in the North-West. Another class of facts indicate the same tendency. The countries whose wealth has not increased like our own have multiplied their population at a very slow rate, and in many of them war, misgovernment, bad sanitary conditions have applied till lately with very great effect the positive checks of Malthus. In others the government has, by legislation expressly directed to that purpose, applied a quasi-preventive check: forbidding marriage until the couple can show their power to maintain a family. In the Scandinavian kingdoms social usage seems to have had a similar effect, since it is not customary for a young man to marry until a house is vacated by the death of its last occupant. Outside of the cities there are com-

monly but a fixed number of houses answering to the fixed number of *employés* on each farm, and only when one of these falls vacant is a new marriage practically possible. It is not true then that the question of population is for individual States a remote one; so remote that even the present generation can afford to disregard it. It is not an urgent question in England; but it might at any moment quickly if not suddenly become so. It is not of course, as I have said, an urgent question for mankind at large; but as regards the Latin races and a great part of Europe it is already a question of pressing and paramount importance; and must continue to keep alive the dangers and alarms generated by intestine feuds until room shall be made for a multiplied number of hands and mouths by emigration or by a discovery of new or a fresh and large development of existing resources—in one word, an increase of productive power on a greater scale than any of which as yet I can discern any sure symptoms. The arguments, then, of Mr. Mill and Mr. Malthus are not—as some modern sociologists have maintained—merely theoretical, and likely to demand actual and practical consideration only at a date indefinitely distant. I cannot agree that it is useless for the present generation to anticipate the discussion of the problem, because, as these thinkers urge, we cannot possibly guess what new forces, social, industrial, or physiological, may by that time have come into play. The various hopes of reconciliation between prudence and instinct suggested by speculators who cannot believe in a direct conflict between distinct natural laws operating in different departments of action—or philosophers whose negation of a spiritual heaven

throws them back for comfort on the dream of an earthly paradise—have never impressed me. The former are apparently kicking against the pricks of that eternal contradiction, the existence of evil. The latter seem to snatch at logical straws because consciously drowning in the ocean of despair that awaits all to whom death is the final end of being. Mr. Herbert Spencer's doctrine, that highly-developed brains mean diminished reproductive power, seems to me contrary to experience in the first place, and in the second to the fact—vital in connection with this argument—that the utmost possible fertility is consistent with—nay, promoted by—the utmost moderation and the least drain on vital forces. Again, the question is one of immediate import if not indeed for England at large yet assuredly for the flower of the English population. The heirs of rich families can afford to marry early. The poorest class will marry early whether they can afford it or no. But those who are not secured against want by hereditary wealth, and are raised by education and social status to a position from which they are intensely reluctant to fall, find it matter of mere prudence, find it essential to the retention of their social position and to all reasonable chance of happiness for their children, to marry late. The partial and local pressure of population on resources—the Malthusian principle that only a stern denial of the strongest natural instinct prevents that pressure from becoming the source of misery to their children—is for the middle class and for the younger sons of the landed gentry a very grave practical and ever-pressing fact. Through them again it affects the well-being of the nation at large. Mr. Galton and other writers have pointed out that it is precisely the

class most capable of contributing to the next generation offspring likely to improve its quality that abstains from marriage; and that this reversal in social life of the Darwinian law respecting "the survival of the fittest" may involve a serious check to that natural improvement of the species which should progress steadily as the laws of health, the value of education, and the influence of hereditary qualities are better understood and appreciated. I know that Cleveland will not admit the assertion that our richer classes, or even the elder sons of our landed aristocracy are as a rule enervated by luxury; and I grant that physically, and perhaps even intellectually, the charge applies only to a minority among them. But after all the owners of hereditary wealth are few—too few seriously to affect the general character of the population. Setting them aside, that phenomenon which the writers in question call "the non-survival of the fittest" is even from my standpoint and still more from theirs a very alarming reality. I rate much more highly than they do the quality of the artisans as compared with the middle class; and I should be content to see the latter comparatively barren, if their place were inherited by the sons of those really skilled manual labourers whose very employment is an education. But in point of fact, the lowest class of labourers, and the class that lies below the lowest of honest labourers, are those that multiply most rapidly, in spite of the "positive" check applied by unwholesome homes, bad habits, and the consequent fearful infant mortality prevailing in our cities. There is really a constant tendency to increase the proportion of our people born from ignorant and morally semi-

barbarous parents. In each generation the number of those who inherit prudence, self-command, and virtue is liable to diminish; the number of those who inherit recklessness and improvidence and brains deficient for lack of intellectual culture to increase, subject only to the advantage which inherited health of body and mind gives to the former, but which could not permanently countervail the excess of births in the latter class. Again, putting aside all questions of social rank, and looking merely at the moral distinctions between individual men and women, the farsighted, the thoughtful, the unselfish, those who think more of the future of their progeny than of their own personal gratification, are those who at present are likely to leave the fewest children; those who are careless, impulsive, willing to gratify their own feelings at the cost of their probable offspring, leave in ever-increasing proportion the more numerous families. There is therefore at work among us a constant tendency to moral and intellectual degeneration, and in this form the Malthusian law operates with ever-present though invisible effect upon England even in the midst of her present extraordinary and abnormal prosperity."

"You were disposed," said Cleveland, "to differ sharply from me, to be almost angry, when I said with reference to this very point that the poverty of the many was due to their own fault or default. Yet, now, you seem inclined to insist much more clearly and strongly than I could do on the duty of self-restraint in regard to marriage and multiplication."

"I said," replied Gerard, "that if you call on the poor to abstain from marriage, you practically call upon

them to forego nearly all the innocent pleasures of their life, and that this is hard and unjust. In postponing marriage, the intellectual or educated class sacrifice comparatively little. They do not even renounce the lowest of its gratifications. They retain all their social pleasures and can indulge their taste for these more fully than after marriage. A gentleman, or even a tradesman, is not obliged to forego the society of cultivated women because he cannot afford to marry. He gives up much less than similar self-denial and prudence would cost the labouring man, and he has tenfold more compensation. At its best, home is to him the source only of one class of pleasures: to the working-man it is the source of nearly every present practical gratification within his reach, except those of drink on the one side and study on the other. Now, while I know better than most men how much reading the better sort of artisans really accomplish, and how much pleasure they get from it, I have learned more and more clearly, as I have grown older and seen more of the world, that the man who has to exhaust, though healthily, each day's supply of nervous force in physical labour voluntary or compulsory, can hardly be a student. Even the educated gentleman who devotes his time to fox-hunting, African lion-shooting, or northern deer-stalking, or turns labourer in the colonies, finds it nearly impossible to keep up his literary and intellectual pursuits. This must of course be the case still more generally and thoroughly with the artisan, who has seldom received an education high enough to render intelligent reading so ingrained a habit as to require no conscious and therefore painful effort beyond what

may be needed by the nature of the subject. Consequently, to sum up my argument, when you call upon him not to marry, you practically demand of him to forego for the best years of his life much more than the celibate professional man foregoes, and you leave him scarcely anything worth living for—except hope.”

“But,” said Dalway, “you imply that the question is not as yet a practical one, seeing that the artisan or labourer can emigrate, and that in Australia or the United States he can maintain a family with ease; while mere sobriety industry and thrift will enable him at the same time to make constant progress in fortune and social rank as well as to secure ease for his old age and leave a competence for his children.”

“Yes,” said Gerard, “if he will emigrate. But emigration in most cases means a postponement of marriage; and is moreover for the present in the estimation of most men itself a sacrifice and effort severe enough to make the pressure of population felt; a very high price to pay even for the right of marrying. Rapid multiplication, then, imposes, even at present, upon our population a choice of evils—for that is evil which inflicts moral or physical pain. If our numbers are to increase at the present rate a considerable percentage of each generation must choose between emigration, which they dislike, and lessened comforts at home, which latter alternative is not merely an immediate sacrifice but a real and permanent evil.”

“Have you not just said,” rejoined Dalway, “that our wealth is really increasing faster than our population? and if that be so, there is for the present no occa-

sion to contemplate the necessity of new and painful restraints on our numbers?"

"I said so," returned Gerard; "but, in the first place, you must remember that the positive check operates upon the lower class by the enormous infant mortality of our cities—a scandal and horror we fail to appreciate. Again, the educated classes do practise a very severe restraint. If they did not, their numbers at least would so increase as in a single generation seriously to affect the existing conditions of social and industrial equilibrium. Next, we have to consider not merely the maintenance of our present standard but its improvement. The condition of millions of English men and women is both in a moral and physical sense thoroughly unsatisfactory. It cannot be made what it ought to be without a great change in the proportion of numbers to resources. Agricultural labourers receive wages on which they can scarcely subsist from hand to mouth during their working years, and which leave them no prospect for old age but the poor-house. The unskilled labourers of our cities cannot live like human beings. They rather exist like swine in a sty. Before the condition of either class can be made such as thoughtful men can contemplate without disgust and shame, their wages must at least be doubled; that is to say, the proportion of numbers to floating capital must be reduced by one-half. Reckless multiplication is the one fatal obstacle to this progress, and is therefore almost if not quite as grave an offence against social interests as Mill considers it."

"I do not think," replied Dalway, "that you are at all consistent. In one sentence you defend the work-

ing-classes for marrying early, saying that it would be intolerably cruel to ask them to sacrifice the domestic pleasures which form the only enjoyable element of their life. In the next sentence you tell us that early marriage and consequent rapid multiplication are a grave sin against the common interests of society."

"I said," returned Gerard, "that it is not *for us* to censure the poor for rapid or even reckless multiplication. To restrain themselves from such indulgence would require on their part such virtue as few of us even pretend to practise. I say, nevertheless, that reckless multiplication is so grave an injury to social interests and human elevation as to constitute a great sin on the part of those who are responsible for it. But there is no inconsistency in this. The wealthier and the more educated classes of English society are certainly in no position to cast the first stone on those who disregard the greatest social interests in order to gratify their strongest individual instincts."

"Let us," said Cleveland, "understand one another clearly. I perfectly appreciate your vindication of your consistency. I admit that a disciple of Malthus and Mill may yet resent with generous earnestness all imputations of reckless selfishness cast by the educated and wealthier classes on the poorer and more ignorant. But I want to understand definitely what your position is. Do you mean to argue that it is a duty on the part of all classes to abstain from rapid multiplication, though the failure of the lower classes in this duty appears to you evidently pardonable?"

"Yes," replied Gerard; "that is exactly my position. So long as the social evil exists, so long as celibacy in-

volves so little of real felt sacrifice on the part of the *men* of the middle class, so long as the social and personal sacrifices involved therein are relatively so very much greater on the part of the artisan and labourer, I deny that the trader or professional man has any right to reproach the workmen for their early marriages. I affirm, nevertheless, that rapid multiplication on the part of any class,—except perhaps those the distribution of whose wealth would be a gain to the community,—is a social offence because it involves an injury to social interests. But I go further than this. I say that the especially rapid multiplication on the one hand of the least educated and intelligent class, and on the other of the least prudent and self-denying individuals of every rank, greatly enhances the danger and mischief of rapid multiplication in general, and converts the prudence and self-restraint of the few into an aggravation of the evil.”

“That is,” said Cleveland, “you consider with Mr. Galton and Mr. W. R. Greg that not only does the nation increase too fast but it breeds to a dangerously large extent from its worst specimens. The classes that multiply fastest are those which cannot transmit to their children a physically sound constitution and the moral and intellectual benefits of inherited culture. The classes which multiply most slowly are those whose children, were they born, would inherit the best physical and moral constitution, a constitution improved and developed in every respect by generations of intellectual education and of practical struggle with the world. You would wish, then, that the paupers and the criminals should leave no children, the labourer com-

paratively few, and that the artisan and the middle class, together with those of the richest class who have not been demoralized by luxury, should contribute the largest possible proportion to the next generation of Englishmen?"

"Yes" said Gerard. "You exactly express my idea, and express it perhaps more distinctly and accurately than I could have done myself. The 'nonsurvival of the fittest' is on the whole almost as grave a danger as the excess of numbers. The latter checks material progress, and indirectly impairs that moral improvement which is always much affected by material conditions; but the former directly impairs the character of each successive generation and gives you poorer human instruments to work with. Thus it directly hinders that development of human excellence, physical intellectual and moral, which is after all the true object and the worthiest result of civilization. As Darwinian philosophers justly tell us, no farmer is so foolish as to breed from his worst animals. But as a nation England breeds, not equally but exceptionally and most largely, from her worst citizens." *

"Granted," said Cleveland. "This fact is one of those innumerable considerations which render so intolerably contemptible and ridiculous the self-gratulations of the age; that cant of what I call *Æonolatry*, which sickens us in every second magazine article and Parliamentary speech—nay in every third scientific lecture—by ignorant and thoughtless panegyrics on the wisdom and the glory of this nineteenth century. Civilization

* See *Hereditary Genius*; and *Enigmas of Life*, "Nonsurvival of the Fittest."

at each upward step interferes more and more directly with those Providential provisions which (as even those who least agree with Darwin must admit him to have proved) have for unnumbered ages tended to improve the various animal and vegetable races and to develop higher varieties and higher individual organisms, if not higher species and genera, out of lower. These provisions formerly acted upon the human race, exterminating its feeblest tribes and classes and diminishing the number of descendants left by the weakest individuals. Now-a-days we not merely keep the two latter alive, not merely put them on an equality with their betters, but actually have so managed matters that the naturally inferior multiply faster than their superiors, and threaten to people the world with a degenerate humanity. I suspect that Wordsworth spoke more truth than he intended when he said that "Carnage is God's daughter." War has at least this great use, that it enlarges the empire and facilitates the multiplication of superior races at the expense of the inferior."

"I hardly see," said Dalway, "how a democrat like Gerard can find much satisfaction in that view. In his theory all classes and all individuals—nay, I suppose, all races—have equal rights, and ought to be allowed to multiply as rapidly as circumstances will allow."

"No," said Gerard. "As a democrat, I assert the moral and political equality of rights among all existing individuals; and if only the existing generation were concerned, I should assert fully the right of all to indulge themselves equally in marriage as in everything else. But consistent democrats—though very prone to

err on this point—cannot deliberately regard the living generation as an aristocracy entitled to gratify its own feelings at the expense of posterity. “The greatest happiness of the greatest number” is a full expression of human duty when applied not to the present only but to the future also; and to the future more than to the present in proportion as the indefinite term of the future exceeds the brief life of a single generation. As a democrat I desire to see the earth peopled with the best possible specimens of humanity, and I cannot admit the moral right of the present generation to afflict an indefinite futurity with its own inheritance of weakness, folly and vice as well as disease and misery.”

“Well then,” said Cleveland, “how do you propose to meet the evil? Democrats are always despots at heart; but a democratic despotism must deal equally with all. Given such absolute power as men will endure, you could hardly fix the permitted number of a family according either to the result of a competitive examination or to the social rank of the parents—which latter even a very moderate Liberal would of course accept only as a rough and unsatisfactory but more practicable test. What would you wish to inculcate as the remedy both for over-rapid multiplication at large and for multiplication of the wrong sort, if you could form the moral ideas and the practical legislation either of England or of the world?”

“I must refer you,” said Gerard, “to the arguments of John Stuart Mill and similar reasoners. I do not any more than yourself believe celibacy to be a wholesome condition. It is at any rate a cruel sacrifice. I

will not admit,—till absolutely forced to perceive the necessity of such confession,—that the only alternative of mankind lies in a choice between monastic isolation with its denial of our dearest and healthiest affections, and such multiplication as involves either deterioration, stagnation, or even slower progress in material prosperity. I should insist on the truth indicated by Mill—unpleasant as it is to dwell upon—that children are not, as preachers, moralists, and novel-writers coolly tell us or more coolly assume, ‘sent by Providence.’ Total or partial sterility apart, the number of a family depends, at least in a negative sense, on the will of the parents. England is almost the only country in which that truth is ignored not merely in language but in action. In some barbarous or semi-civilized societies the average number of children to a marriage is limited by infanticide. In most civilized lands it is, purposely or otherwise, restricted to an average far smaller than that common in English homes. The law of equal inheritance, coupled with the practice of peasant proprietorship, has practically limited the usual number of French families to fewer than three children. If this were the case elsewhere the general evil of excessive multiplication would be at an end. While I would thus inculcate on the lower classes the duty, not of celibacy but of prudential restraint, I would endeavour to mitigate the excessive prudence of the more cultivated classes. By discouraging to the uttermost everything like ostentation and excess of luxury, I would render marriage cheaper and earlier among them, so that they should contribute at least their fair

share of children physically healthy, morally sound, and intellectually vigorous to each successive generation."

"I thought so," said Cleveland. "I would not speak harshly of Mill's own errors, pestilent as I think them, because in nearly every sentence he writes on this subject one perceives his profound, astonishing, absolute ignorance at once of human instincts and of physiological facts. When he tell us that a numerous family is the result of tyranny exercised by the husband over the wife—of selfish gratification of masculine wishes contrary to feminine feeling—he displays an ignorance of the fundamental premises of all argument on the subject so signal and complete that one can fairly attribute to ignorance much that in a better-informed writer would seem deliberate immorality. How he could remain so ignorant I am puzzled to understand. Had he spoken to any half-dozen intimate married friends before writing this extraordinary statement, he could never have committed himself to an allegation so exactly the reverse of the truth. We know beyond doubt that what phrenologists call the philo-progenitive instincts are in married women even stronger than in men. Again, by some mysterious law of God or provision of Nature, the physical and moral elements of love are so related—the passion is so closely, deeply, intricately, inextricably entwined with the sentiment and affection—that every attempt permanently to deny or artificially to pervert the one lacerates, tortures, and ruins the latter. Every medical adviser who has reached our age, every man who has seen much of the varied errors and follies of this experimental epoch, must have known a dozen

cases in which, for reasons sufficiently grave and authoritatively urged, the habits of celibacy have been for a longer or shorter time imported into married life. I have never heard of a single case in which such an attempt has, in any true sense of the word, succeeded. Too often it has resulted in lifelong estrangement or separation. In every case I have known or heard of—whatever its justification, even if that justification have amounted to moral necessity—it has given rise to restless heart-ache, misery, bitterness and domestic trouble; often so intolerable that I believe both parties would have preferred the worst consequences of a simple adhesion to Nature and common sense (even had those consequences involved the life of one or both) could they have foreseen, before it was too late, the results that actually ensued from obeying the counsels of would-be science. The characteristic lunacy of this age—a desire to be wiser than God Almighty—prevails largely among the scientists of to-day, whose predecessors were more on their guard against it than any class less familiar with the contrast between Creative wisdom and human ignorance: and no error or crime is so certainly or so severely visited. The most preposterous and most dangerous suggestion by which Mill would avoid the hardship of celibacy has had frequent trial and has resulted as all experiments against Nature have resulted. Look at France, where through the law of equal inheritance his ideal state is attained, and the average number of children does not reach three. Look at the States of New England and the North-eastern cities, where for social reasons the same dread of large families prevails to an extent affecting seriously the blood, and consequently

the quality of the population: the native element, that made Massachusetts what she is, dying out before a mongrel immigration as incapable of her old republican virtues as ignorant of her Puritan traditions. What are the visible achievements of this principle? We know that French conjugal life is about the least satisfactory in Christendom, though the strong domestic affections of the Celt are manifested in every other relation. American physicians have told us at what a fearful cost of health and happiness, in the North-eastern States, wives have secured their escape from the burden which, in a country where domestic service is so dear and so bad, a numerous family entails on the mother. In every case whose general nature I have learned from professional advisers or otherwise, the disregard of physiological principle and natural instinct has brought on races and individuals swift terrible moral and physical punishment. It is a terrible truth, moreover, that here as elsewhere *corruptio optimi pessima*. The more deep, pure and sensitive has been the love thus crossed, the more dangerous the experiment, the more intolerable the consequences, the more irreparable as well as more cruel the revulsion. The physical evil is bad enough, but it is of the earth, earthly; the moral mischief has no limits till hopeless insanity or utter spiritual debasement is reached. In truth I cannot believe that any man—not exceptionally constituted and united to a partner of equally abnormal temperament—could have acted on Mill's ideas in any form, and conscientiously defended them or recommended them to others after five years' experience. This form of prudence, devoid of intentional sacrifice

as of instinctive delicacy, is in ultimate effect far more cruel, more injurious to physical health, to moral character, to natural affection than celibacy itself. Celibacy has been tried under the most favourable conditions in monasteries and nunneries, where by the conditions of the life and rule prescribed temptation is almost excluded. Among the men who are vowed to it it has produced innumerable cases of insanity. Among the women it develops religious mania, in whose illusions no physiologist can fail to recognise the reaction of natural instincts constrained and perverted. No sound physiologist can read the records of the lives of Roman Catholic saints, and especially of female saints, without discerning through the mists of their visions, at the root of their passionate devotional meditations, in fact throughout their whole thought and life, the domination of a passion, unconscious indeed and distorted, but the more powerful and all-pervading because denied its rightful place and play. I affirm, then, that the prudential restraint of Malthus—prolonged celibacy—tends to insanity and moral perversion. Moreover, postponement of marriage on the part of men has ordinarily no serious tendency to check population, since such men marry women much younger than themselves, and generally rear families as large as the average. I affirm again that the more selfish alternative intended by Mill—which Malthus as a clergyman and a man of practical experience would have regarded with horror—is far worse than celibacy; is in fact fatal to personal character, inner morality, and domestic happiness. The worst results of reckless multiplication are better than the best that could be obtained from either of these

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methods. The simplest and the noblest natures must be the first to rebel against anything that tends to degrade to a purely animal level the enjoyments which the truly human elements of love have refined and spiritualized till pleasures, brutelike in their lowest form, have in their highest become a foretaste of heaven, and realized in true wedlock and pure home life all that poets have dreamed of an inviolate Eden and an un-fallen humanity."

After a brief pause of doubt, or perhaps of mournful and touching memories suggested by Cleveland's last few words, Gerard said, "Are you sure of your facts? Most of them are new to me, and, I think, to many who know America better than I do."

"Naturally," said Cleveland; "for they are accessible only through intimate knowledge of American private life, through a careful study of the vilest hints of vile newspapers, or through books not attractive to or forced upon ordinary critics. But if you will study attentively the American statistics, and the writings, chiefly medical, to which I have referred, you will find that my views are fully sustained by sufficient professional evidence, confirmed by the figures of the census and the remarks of unconscious witnesses. I will not now discuss this point further, unless you have taken trouble to inquire into those experiences which I have thought it a duty to study."

"No," returned Gerard. "I have not done so, nor had I supposed it necessary. I believe, however, that your physiological views if not unsound are at least exaggerated. Your moral censure of Mill rests so much on personal feeling that it can hardly be elucidated or

refuted by discussion. You will however admit that the question of population is a serious and, in some senses, an urgent one. I grant that the world has ample room not only for its existing population but for any increase we can reasonably expect within that comparatively short period to which our present limited knowledge obliges us to confine all practical speculations. Nevertheless you know that the actual life of England and the state of English society is gravely affected, I might almost say is moulded, at the present moment by the operation of the Malthusian laws. Partly from the reluctance to emigrate which arises from the ignorance of unskilled labourers and the natural dislike of skilled artisans to the roughness and hardship of a new country, partly from the fact that there is little demand in the colonies for the labour of the more highly-educated classes, emigration is not yet a practically sufficient remedy. It does not at any rate relieve the middle classes from the necessity of prudential restraint and prolonged celibacy. The latter at least is a grave evil, exacting heavy sacrifice on the part of the men and imposing still heavier and not optional suffering and disadvantage on the women. If you reject peremptorily the alternative more or less covertly commended by Mill and one or two other thinkers of the same school, and advocated with even revolting directness and coarseness in a work to which an ill-advised prosecution has given extensive notoriety, you should, I think, be prepared frankly and clearly to state your own view of the case. Either you must accept the evils connected with over-population as an inherent and inseparable incident of our existing civilization—and in

that case I think such civilization stands *ipso facto* condemned—or you should tell us how you would deal with the mischief.”

“In the first place,” replied Cleveland, “I repeat my rooted conviction that the worst evils of over-population while any kind of emigration is available are trivial compared to those which must flow from the acceptance of either Mill’s or Malthus’s ideas. Rather than adopt either, I would advise all the classes whose numbers are at present in excess of the demand for their services frankly to face the worst perils, discomforts, and disadvantages of colonial frontier life. I would say to unskilled labourers—‘You will find nothing in Australian or American hardships which, after a few months, will not become matter of pure indifference to you.’ I would say to the artisans—‘You are hardy enough to turn from one occupation to another; and if there be not in a colony much demand for your special arts, you will nevertheless earn higher real remuneration as comparatively unskilled labourers there than you earn as skilled operatives here.’ To the younger sons of the gentry and the poorer youth of the middle class I would say, ‘Sacrifice your pride and love of comfort, accept the disadvantages of colonial life, and turn shepherds for two or three years and farmers for life in order to marry and have a home, rather than lead the unnatural and unwholesome life of unmarried denizens of English commercial and manufacturing towns.”

“But after all,” remarked Dalway, “you only postpone the evil. A time must come, and, if your advice were followed, would come very soon, when even the

Colonies would be too full to allow of unrestricted multiplication."

"No," said Cleveland. "That time is too remote to come within the scope of practical consideration. We may look forward for a century or two at the furthest. It is folly to carry our anticipations further, because we cannot guess what new influences may be brought to bear in the meantime; or what changes in the conditions of the present problems of life may by that time have occurred. I do not presume to depreciate the authority of those philosophers,—among whom one at least, and he the chief, Herbert Spencer, has beyond doubt given careful study to all the facts bearing on the question—who believe as Gerard has set forth that the intellectual development of the human race tends to arrest multiplication; and that, so far at least as regards the higher families of mankind, long before the world begins to be crowded this check will have come so largely into play as to put an end to all alarms regarding the undue increase of numbers. Here is at least a theory, if not a proven one, suggesting the possibility that totally changed conditions may come into play long before *the earth* can be overpeopled."

"Do you believe in that theory?" asked Gerard.

"Not much," replied Cleveland. "So far as I can see, I agree with you that the facts entirely fail to bear it out. In the first place, were the fact ascertained, the supposed check would counteract itself. *Ex hypothesi* the intellectual men would leave few offspring to inherit their intelligence and sterility, while the dull and ignorant would leave many to

inherit their inferior brain-development and superior prolificity: so that, at least in so far as hereditary influences operate, each generation would tend to be more prolific and less intellectual than its predecessors. And I doubt the alleged correlation between brain-force and sterility. The families of the educated classes are as large—in proportion to the age of marriage among their women—as those of the uneducated. *À priori* no doubt we must admit that no part of the human frame can absorb an increased proportion of the vital energies or material nutriment of the whole save at the expense of other parts; and, again, that there exist relations of a very peculiar character between intellectual and reproductive force. It would seem that these rival powers severally make a call on the same limited store of special vital forces or physical nutriment, and that in proportion as the one absorbs more the other must be content with less; that in fact the over-development or over-indulgence of either can only take place at the expense of the other. But still, considering primarily that *à priori* aspect of the matter on which Mr. Spencer and his disciples rely, I see no reason to think that larger or more active brains need imply lessened tendency to multiplication. Still less am I satisfied that such would be the effect of hereditary culture and gradual mental development. Probably with improved organization or increased development of the nervous system would come an increased power of assimilating the special nutriment required; and it seems at any rate not unlikely that a human variety superior at once in intellect and *physique* to the highest existing

families might even surpass them in its rate of multiplication. Turning to facts, we find that that exceptional sterility of exceptionally intellectual natures on which Mr. Spencer and his disciples lay stress is peculiar, at least in the male sex, to abnormal mental and probably physical constitutions. Women with masculine brain-power are no doubt exceptionally barren; but this fact will never exercise much influence on the rate of human multiplication, for such women will rarely be sought as wives; and in my belief they will always be moral monstrosities, and as rare as other monsters. As a rule I believe that able men, especially men of strong and sound intellectual and bodily conformation, do and always will have families of full average number; and that the same is the case, and will always be the case, with intelligent women whose brains have not, either before birth or during education, been developed at serious expense to their general health.”

“Then,” said Dalway, “to what possible or probable changes do you look for any future relief from the pressure of those Malthusian laws of population whose theoretical truth and actual influence on life you seem to confess?”

“I have expressly said,” returned Cleveland, “that speculation in regard to a distant future is useless, because we cannot even guess what the changed conditions of the problem may be. But even my very limited theoretical knowledge of chemistry, agriculture and mechanics would enable me, if necessary, to suggest half a score of conceivable inventions which would enable a given soil to sustain a largely increased

population without any proportionate increase of labour. Suppose, for example, a discovery which should enable the farmer to obtain at will abundant supplies of ammonia from the hydrogen of atmospheric vapour and the nitrogen of the air. This would multiply indefinitely the productive power of all soils, and especially of the less fertile. Again, electric science is in its infancy; but we know that electricity has much to do with the growth and form of plants. Suppose that in a century hence men should learn how to direct the forces which control vegetable growth as they now direct and command those of steam and chemical affinity. Here again we might achieve an almost indefinite power of multiplying the production of food on a given area. I say then that it is needless to consider the problem of human multiplication in its ultimate aspect. For aught we know, every condition of the problem may be changed long before mankind at large can possibly be even as closely crowded as the population of Spain or Massachusetts, to say nothing of England, Belgium or Lombardy. And for the present pressure on particular classes and countries emigration affords a remedy, not indeed painless, but absolutely sufficient. There is, therefore, no excuse for those who would inculcate a resort to measures certainly unnatural and perilous, and, in my belief, vicious, degrading and demoralizing."

"It seems to me," said Dalway, "that Spencer's theory receives a certain kind of confirmation or probability from the fact that peerages, especially those conferred for intellectual services in recent generations, are so apt to expire for want of heirs.

Can you assign any other cause for this than either natural sterility due to hereditary culture, or the alleged tendency of a luxurious life to produce the same effect, as domestication is known to do with many tameable beasts?"

"Certainly I can," said Cleveland. "Have you forgotten Macaulay's remarks on this point in his reply to Sadler? Peerages, in the first place, descend only to male heirs, so that in every case where the family of the first peer, however numerous, consists of daughters the title necessarily expires or lapses. Again, peerages descend only to legitimate heirs, and there are reasons why junior members of noble families should abstain from legal marriage. Taken as a class the latter probably leave fewer legitimate children than the average. The peerage, then, is apt to depend on the direct lineage exclusively; and probably there are few families in which the succession of eldest sons or of direct male heirs is uninterrupted for many generations. Again, peers, and peers' sons, eldest and youngest alike, are apt to marry heiresses, and heiresses are *ex vi termini* sterile. They would not as a rule inherit the fortune of their parents were they not only children, and they are only children because as a rule there is a tendency on one or both sides of their ancestry which they of course are likely to inherit. The successors of peers ennobled for recent public services are especially likely to marry heiresses, because they seldom inherit a fortune suitable to their rank. These considerations taken altogether sufficiently explain that exceptional sterility of the peerage to which you refer without supposing it in any degree

ascribable to intellectual, moral, or physical influences."

"But," said Dalway, "there certainly exists some strong physiological check on population, seeing that not one family in fifty reaches its possible—which I suppose we must consider its natural—number. Except man, every animal as a rule produces, accidents excepted, offspring at every proper interval during the period of breeding. If this were true of mankind most women would have from twelve to twenty children, whereas we know that the average number is under five."

"Of course," replied Cleveland, "there is some check to that extreme arithmetically possible multiplication whereof you speak. Probably few women have vitality enough for such a strain. But the multiplication regarded by economists as alarming, the rate contemplated by the Malthusian theory, is not the theoretically possible but the practically usual rate; usual, that is, in the absence of checks positive or preventive. If everybody married and every marriage produced an average of four children, the increase of population would be rapid enough to bear out fully the calculations of Malthus."

"Still," said Dalway, "the fact that women as a rule have only one-fourth or one-fifth of the number of children which would *à priori* have been expected, indicates the existence of some signal distinction in reproductive power between man and animals. One hears of large families in colonies and among savage tribes, though in the latter case the number is kept down by infant mortality below the civilized average. Is it not probable that the operative cause to which the com-

parative sterility of human kind is due must be sought in the enormously disproportionate development of the brain and intellectual powers as compared with those of animals ?”

“It is possible, of course,” said Cleveland ; “and if we could make out that savages had more children than civilized peoples, or that the number of births to a marriage was greater—proportionately to the age at which women are married—in the poorer than in the higher classes of our own society, this would be strong presumptive evidence in favour of Spencer’s view. But till these points are cleared up I cannot, even apart from Gerard’s well-taken physical objection, see any distinct evidence on that side of the question ; and at any rate I see no reason to think that within the course of the next thousand years the human brain will be so largely developed as greatly to impair human reproductiveness. It seems tolerably clear that no such increased development has taken place within the last twenty-five centuries.”

Here the conversation came to an end, and after a few minutes the party broke up earlier than Cleveland had expected ; though as we retired he remarked that the discussion had been left altogether incomplete and unsettled. It was resumed the next day during an afternoon walk in which we were joined by Vere.

“You have laid much stress,” Gerard said to Cleveland, “on the demoralizing influence of some parts of Mill’s counsel, if not of the Malthusian theory. Does it not strike you that selfishness is at the root of early marriages and rapid multiplication, and that self-restraint implies a denial of our own appetites and feel-

ings for the benefit of our species which it is eminently desirable to encourage?"

"No," replied Cleveland. "That view may be theoretically sound enough, and may be practically true in exceptional cases. But as a rule the motives which lead men to postpone marriage or limit the number of their children are quite as egotistical as those which prompt them to marry early and burden themselves with a numerous family. The selfishness of old bachelors, the frivolity of old maids, are proverbial; and though the latter charge is applicable I think only to a minority—perhaps because women remain unmarried by the will of others rather than their own—there can be little doubt that prolonged celibacy, in our sex at least, tends to selfishness and does not always spring out of true self-denial."

"I think," interposed Vere, "that you put the case a little too harshly and too strongly. I believe that not a few of those men who abstain from marriage are really actuated, at least in the first instance, by consideration for their possible children. I am sure that many are actuated by care for those they would wish to make their wives. I have constantly seen men draw back, give up pleasant society and make considerable sacrifices of personal feeling, rather than run the risk of drawing down women who have taken their fancy into social disadvantage or actual poverty. I cannot say, however, that I admire or approve this prudence save in the extremer class of cases. I grant that men have no right to bring into the world children whom they cannot hope to feed, and therefore must not marry till they can maintain a family. Probably they

are right in holding that they should not run the risk of giving birth to children whose inherited sensitiveness and refinement will be shocked by the poverty they would have to endure and to whom life would not be on the whole enjoyable: and, again, that it is cruel to take advantage of a girl's uncalculating eager affection to involve her in troubles and impose upon her sacrifices and toils for which her character and education unfit her, and for which, after a few years, love will not compensate. But as a rule both lovers and parents are apt to carry this prudence much too far. If the cautious bachelor has fair right to expect that he will be able to maintain wife and children in tolerable comfort, it is no true kindness in him to abstain from marriage; it is false prudence in parents to discourage it because the girl will have to forego most of the luxuries of her parental home. The effect of this prudence is, in perhaps a majority of instances, that the girl never marries, and her life is more completely spoilt than it need have been spoilt by anything short of abject poverty in marriage. The vanity of human nature makes in this respect one of those numerous mistakes to which it is prone. Men now-a-days overrate their own foresight and wisdom and underrate proportionately the value and soundness of the instincts they derive directly from the hand of their Creator. We know very little indeed of the real purposes of earthly life or of the possibilities of that future which we so confidently calculate and forecast. Unless a man's special circumstances are such as to constitute a distinct Providential indication of his duty, he will do best to be guided by those natural impulses and powerful instincts which

his Creator has implanted in the heart; and which on the whole are safer guides than logical reasonings founded on those exceedingly limited premises which alone our human knowledge permits us to discern. And on the other hand the guidance we derive from revelation contradicts directly the arguments of Malthus and the advice of Mill."

"Certainly," said Cleveland, "most men in postponing marriage think rather of the troubles it might bring on themselves than of those it might possibly entail on their children or even on their wives. One proof that their motives are mainly egotistical is commonly overlooked. Fear of poverty restrains hundreds and thousands from marriage; but, if they feared poverty for their children's sake rather than their own, they would be doubly careful not to entail on possible offspring evils far worse than poverty in its worst form. Yet how few men conscientiously abstain from marriage lest their offspring should inherit a poisoned constitution; a danger which as a rule is much more obvious and certain than any arising from present pecuniary pressure! How few hesitate to marry even when they know that the terrible curse of insanity clings to their family, and that on a reasonable calculation of probabilities one at least of their children will, after years of unhappiness and suffering such as probably sane men can never appreciate, end his existence as a prisoner for life in a lunatic asylum! How very few scruple to bequeath to another generation, nay to many generations, the physical disease and moral deformity which the vice most common among the youth of the educated classes is apt to entail on their posterity! I

doubt whether, for a hundred men who refuse to marry because they cannot afford such a home as their tastes demand or their pride would like to give their wives, there be one who conscientiously remains celibate lest his children should inherit scrofula or consumption. Yet, surely, it is much more pardonable to risk bequeathing to another generation the poverty which comes by the visitation of Providence than the disease which we know to be the result of our own or our parents' misconduct. Moreover, the laws of inheritance are so certain and so clear that no man can reasonably say to himself that he trusts to Providence to save his children from the diseases, mental or physical, which he knows to be existent or latent in his own constitution; whereas the possibilities of fortune are so uncertain that the poorest man cannot feel assured that he will not be able when the time comes to feed clothe and educate his children decently, and only the richest can well feel sure that he will be able to do more."

"Ay," said Vere. "Parents have much to answer for, in that they do not as a rule speak much more plainly and frankly to their children on these points. Perhaps five-sixths of our youth marry with no real knowledge of the laws of inheritance; and of the remainder only a minority are truthfully told what diseased tendencies of brain or body are latent in their own constitutions. Family records, painful family reminiscences are kept secret from those who are most deeply concerned to know them. We see sons daily permitted to undertake what from any point of view is a terrible responsibility, in disastrous ignorance or sheer heedlessness, because their fathers shrink from the pain of saying to them

frankly—'Your uncle was insane; Your aunt committed suicide; Your grandfather bequeathed gout in various forms to nearly all his descendants; and you unhappily inherit from my youthful follies a taint of scrofula, which, though you are yet unaware of it, may probably affect the lives and happiness of your children.' I have seen one family after another permit its children to marry in ignorance of facts like these, and I have thought that they sinned most grievously. There is the less excuse for them that they are so careful of much less momentous considerations when marriage is in question. They think as a rule much more of the fortune than of the character that a daughter-in-law may bring to her husband. If she herself be fairly good, well educated and well principled, and if her immediate parents have not incurred public disgrace, they seldom look further. They will do their utmost to prevent a son from marrying the daughter of a tradesman without a dowry, while they would congratulate him on his engagement to the daughter of a baronet with ten thousand pounds who brought with her an inheritance of disease, physical or moral, likely to affect her children, and through them to be the misery of her husband."

"Nay," said Dalway, "I think that few thoughtful and high-minded parents would willingly see their children marry persons tainted either by physical infirmity or clearly discernible and serious moral faults. I certainly count among my friends more parents who would object to a doubtful character than who would stubbornly refuse to accept a son or daughter-in-law without a penny."

“Granted,” said Cleveland. “I am not thinking of the bride herself but of her family. She may perchance have escaped in her own person alike their diseases and their vices, and yet may be almost certain to give birth to children tainted by both. Our novelists—who are practically the moralists of the age, doing more than preachers or writers to form the ethical standard of our rising generation—have much to answer for in this respect. They represent as an act of generosity and courage what is really a sin against posterity; as a cowardice that which may be the noblest sacrifice to duty. One of their favourite problems is found in the situation of a man engaged to a girl—herself beautiful, healthful, and virtuous,—whose father turns out to be a scoundrel or a felon. If on that ground her lover avoids the marriage, he is represented as at best a mean-spirited craven, frightened of the world’s opinion. Yet a conscientious man, familiar with the laws of inheritance, and knowing how seldom children reproduce exactly their parents’ character or features, how constantly they resemble grand-parents or collateral relatives, would probably take an exactly opposite view. For my own part, I would rather have married the daughter of a second-rate tradesman who had received no better education than that of a National school, than the child of a peer, whose father was known as a black-leg on the turf or whose mother was a divorcée; and this though the daughter herself had the heart and the form of an angel. Of all reasons that might render the breach of a solemn engagement not merely a right but a duty, the discovery in the parent of an intended wife of vices likely to descend to her children seems to

me the strongest and the most sufficient. The reckless disregard of all these considerations shown in the marriages daily contracted by educated men, seems to me one of the most monstrous moral inconsistencies of the age ; an inconsistency even less excusable than that so severely and justly reprobated by some economists and moralists, of allowing hereditary paupers or persons deprived of sight or hearing to marry and bring into the world children who in all probability will be incapable of caring for themselves and a source not of profit but of unmitigated and permanent injury to society."

"And yet," said Gerard, "there is certainly another side to the question. You have yourself said, and I fully agree with you, that celibacy is a dangerous and an unnatural state. Even where, as in monasteries and nunneries, the celibate is entirely withdrawn—withdrawn for the most part at an early age—from the society of the other sex, from everything that could tempt or excite the instinct he or she is compelled to deny, the injurious effects are clearly and painfully visible. In order that serious scandal may not follow their intercourse with the world, it is necessary to subject the secular priests of the Roman Church to an exceptional training; to separate them in early youth from men intended for the life of the world; and to put them under especial checks and restraints of various kinds in addition to the merely moral obligation imposed by a religion which regards chastity as the highest of human virtues and the most essential of priestly duties. Yet in most Catholic countries—where theological antagonism does not, as in face of a Protestant people, enforce fidelity—sacerdotal unchastity and im-

purity were during the Middle Ages almost proverbial, and in some they are still generally imputed. Yet if perfect chastity in a celibate life can be easy to any, it should be to monks, priests, and nuns. We do not know enough of the inner life of the Shakers to form any clear judgment as to the results of a similar suppression in their exceptional communities; but all we know of all human experience forces us to believe that nothing is rarer or more difficult than absolute purity among unmarried men, and nothing more trying in one way or another to the bodily and mental health of either sex. Remember what terrific penalties Roman law and tradition affirm to have been necessary to secure the chastity of a few selected Vestals. The demand proves too severe for the endurance of those who are specially trained to it, and incited to fulfil it by the strongest alike of religious moral and even temporal motives. How then can you reasonably ask it from men and women exceptionally weak; or exceptionally deprived of other gratifications? Take the case of those whose constitutions are impaired by the actual or latent taint of insanity or scrofula. The former directly weakens the mental power and control, especially the control of the will and judgment over the passions. The latter acts less directly; but, in poisoning the whole physical system, can hardly fail more or less to impair that force of will, that despotic empire of the conscience over the character and conduct, which is of all human virtues and qualities perhaps the highest, certainly the rarest, the most slowly, hardly and seldom developed. Such despotism of the will over the impulses and of the judgment over the will as you would

demand of tainted constitutions, has with extreme difficulty and in the course of countless ages been developed in a few of the highest races; and—to the extent you require—only in the highest and generally in the best-educated specimens of those races. Can you rationally make such a demand on defective natures? Can you—without a severity which if exercised voluntarily involves almost ascetic self-denial, and if imposed from without is rather cruelty than austerity—exact from those whom Providence has already deprived of so much of the ordinary enjoyment of life, (as the blind or the deaf,) a sacrifice found too hard for those of their fellow-creatures who possess every gratification that Nature bestows on man through the senses of sight and hearing? Above all, how can you expect such a sacrifice from that weakest and lowest class in civilized communities which you designate as hereditary paupers?”

“In the last case,” replied Cleveland, “it must evidently, if attained at all, be enforced by law, and I think that society has a clear right to enforce it. I doubt greatly whether the obligation, legal in England and in some American States, to keep alive all those who have actually been born into the world and cannot support themselves, be more than a political expedient;—*i.e.*, whether it be in any sense morally or permanently binding on society. But at any rate such an obligation, whether imposed by morality or voluntarily assumed, carries with it corresponding rights. None of those rights is more obvious, more absolute, more undeniable than the right to limit peremptorily the future number of such unhappy dependants.

Those who must be fed and sheltered at the expense of others have no right whatever to multiply the number of useless mouths and miserable lives, or to increase indefinitely the burden their existence imposes on the community. And, if society have the right to prevent such multiplication, true charity requires that the right shall be exercised. It may be, nay it is, hard on the individual paupers of the present generation; but the suffering they undergo through such restraint is but a fraction of that which their multiplication would entail on the next generation of their own class, and trivial indeed in comparison with the importance of checking human degeneration by constantly cutting off the lowest and most degenerate elements in each civilized community."

"I doubt," said Vere, "whether Our Lord would have listened to such a plea. I have always thought that there was much force in the censure pronounced by a journal whose intellectual subtlety is almost as remarkable as the earnestness of its moral faith upon a somewhat similar but wider proposition. The critic urged that Christian civilization aims at a moral development higher than, and to a certain extent incompatible with, that Darwinian form of development which the criticized economist and those who think with him would propose as an object of aspiration to civilized man. The gentleman to whom that censure was by literary rumour attributed is one of the most thoughtful and original moralists of the age; and his opposition to economic austerity deserves the more respect and attention that he is himself a trained economist and familiar with the general principles of

Darwinian physiology. When such a writer tells us that the law of savage life 'let the strong trample out the weak' has been superseded under the Christian, or, if you prefer the phrase, the modern form of civilization by a higher law 'let the strong sacrifice themselves for the weak;' if I cannot entirely agree with his conclusions I am bound to admit that his premises appear to me essentially and clearly Christian. In trying to extirpate the lowest and most helpless portion of society we may, he thinks, demoralize the higher; and purchase physical and intellectual development at the price of a retrogression in nobler and more permanently beneficial elements of human nature as regarded in its modern or Christian aspect."

"I grant," said Cleveland, "all you have said in honour of the controversialist in question:—

' I know his heart, I know his hand ;
Have shared his cheer and proved his brand.'

I have crossed swords with him too often to slight his weapon—to think that his reasonings can be lightly passed over even when his logic is evidently controlled by his feelings—when his intellect and judgment are not the rulers but the instruments of his sympathies. But the question as I put it is not of sacrificing a class to the general advantage of society. I should be content to leave that right entirely aside. I will rest my assertion that suppression of pauper multiplication is a social duty solely on the ultimate interests of the paupers themselves. True charity, Christian as well as secular, must regard (as Gerard says of democracy) not merely the present but also

and at least equally the future; must consider the greatest happiness of the greatest number not for this generation only but for generations to come. To gratify the instincts and somewhat brighten the lives of two miserable and useless beings, the argument you adopt would bring into life four beings equally useless and miserable. For every pang he spared the existing sufferers, he would inflict tenfold misery on twice their number in the next generation. Therefore on this point—if the writer in question would allow his argument to be carried so far—I must, provisionally at least, consider him condemned on his own grounds and by reasons whose force he would admit as fully as myself.”

“But,” said Gerard, “if I grant that you are right in affirming that it is the privilege and the duty of society to repress the multiplication of hereditary paupers—who, since they cannot exist, cannot multiply, save by the permission and help of society; how will you deal with the case of those in whom the taint of inherited disease is latent, or at all events does not interfere with their power of self-support? I hardly think that you would tolerate a law so inquisitorial as would be needed even to check, much more to prevent, their marriage. You cannot insist on a medical certificate of health as a prerequisite; and if you could, you know that to prevent marriage among persons capable of self-support is not to check multiplication but only to promote illicit unions and general immorality.”

“Granted,” returned Cleveland. “I never dreamed (at least since I reached the mental stature of adult manhood) that in the present state of society, or in any state we need contemplate as even remotely possible

paternity—still less maternity—could be made by law the exclusive privilege of the healthy. I may, in youth and under the influence of Greek philosophy, have imagined Utopias in which such legal control should be possible. But for obvious reasons Greek philosophy postponed unscrupulously the individual—his liberty, his welfare, even his free personal development—to the safety and strength of the State. The earlier and greater of those philosophers lived in an age when the liberty, the wealth, the personal safety of each citizen depended on the effective military force of the community. The later were removed but by a few generations from an age when neither State nor family could permanently hold the right of existence by any other title than that of physical force. Even under the Macedonian tyranny and the Roman Empire, when Athens was no longer a State, and even the Hellenic name had ceased to command reverence or inspire patriotic pride, philosophy still lay under the spell of traditions inherited from a then recent past; and, beneath the shadow of the Parthenon, could not emancipate itself from ideas native to the mother-city of Socrates and Plato in an age when the smallness of nearly all free communities rendered the relation of the State to the citizen naturally closer, its claims paramount. Hence not only cant and confusion, much unreality of language and affectation of an anachronistic sentiment; but hence also a disposition to attach much undue value to opinion, much wrongful authority to law. Even Epicurus did little to emancipate his followers from the fear of powers which could interrupt their quiet life of pleasure. Christianity, defying Cæsar, demanded submission to the votes of an

ignorant Church. The philosophy of the Porch alone asserted the intrinsic primacy of the individual soul—upheld the dignity of the *Man* against all the pretensions of *men*; and this idea it was that gave to the Stoic, despite all the chimerical extravagances of a creed that contradicted consciousness and outraged common-sense, his immovable vantage-ground of self-respect; extorting from tyrant and populace the highest tribute they could give, their hatred and their fear. Modern thought for ample reason is jealous of all needless or avoidable State interference with personal liberty; nor do consistent thinkers willingly invoke, in the absence of legal coercion, the usurping power of opinion. It is not intellectual arrogance or personal pride, still less misanthropy, that has induced me, small as is my claim to a place among the Few, rather to pique myself on my own profound indifference to public opinion, whether it be the opinion of a nation or of a village, of a class or of a community. Intellectual and moral development, nay that inventive genius to which civilization owes so much—above all personal dignity and the serenity essential to peace of mind and possibility of happiness, depend for present existence and future progress on the power of the individual to stand alone, apart from, independent of, if necessary defying the intrusive censure or hostile aspect of numbers. Whatever restraint, then, is to be imposed on a matter so closely touching individual right and domestic privacy as the multiplication of diseased constitutions must be imposed by conscience and by conscience alone. I admit the extreme severity—if you will, the cruelty—of the sacrifice demanded by those who hold that persons inheriting latent or

actual disease or infirmity should abstain from marriage. I do not think that the best of us are sufficiently unselfish either in principle or in conduct to have a right to sit in judgment on those who decline to make that sacrifice. But you will remember that it was not primarily of such absolute sacrifices on the part of the sufferers that we spoke. All that any of us were disposed to regard as practically to be exacted by conscience and enlightened judgment was that neither man nor woman should choose a partner in whom there was reason to suspect such a taint. We agreed that fortune, social rank, and all the other considerations which are actually regarded in marriage whether by the parties themselves or by their parents, are trivial and would even on grounds of pure egotism be disregarded, in comparison with those considerations affecting moral and physical soundness which are so commonly neglected by both. On this point I think we none of us seriously differ; and I doubt whether the *S*— itself would be disposed within these limits to deny the justice of our reasoning.”

CHAPTER XIII.

TRUTH IN COMMON THINGS.

AT breakfast on Sunday Mrs. Cleveland inquired of each of our party severally, excepting her husband, whether we meant to attend the morning service at Mr. Vere's church, some two miles off. All in the first instance declined; but Gerard, seeing a look of slight disappointment on her face, said, "If you wish to go, Mrs. Cleveland, and if Cleveland is not at liberty to escort you, I shall be honoured and happy in acting as his deputy."

"Thank you," she answered. "Algernon declines on principle to attend the services; though he seldom misses one of Mr. Vere's afternoon sermons, which are intended especially to set forth the theoretical ideas or historical doctrines of that section of the Church to which he belongs. But I should have thought that your views on such matters were so like my husband's that you would feel nearly the same objections to the service, or at least to attend it yourself."

"Perhaps much stronger objections to the service," said Gerard. "Whenever I have discussed theological questions with Cleveland, I have always found him inclined if not actually to maintain yet to regard as defensible many tenets of the Church from which I

entirely revolted. I have heard avowed Secularists revile him for this; and he has more than once shown me that, on many historical and critical issues, the case of orthodoxy is stronger than heretical scholars and anti-theist speculators are at all willing to admit. He is on such topics the one fairly impartial and generally dispassionate reasoner of my acquaintance. I did not propose to go to Church from any sense of religious duty, or from any disposition at all in accord with the doctrine or tone of the Liturgy; but simply as an obligation of courtesy due to my hostess in the first place, and for the pleasure of your company in the second."

"Surely," said Mrs. Dalway, "the relative weight you assign to your several motives is somewhat misplaced. You might at least have set the pleasure of a lady's society before the performance of an almost compulsory courtesy."

"I trust," answered Gerard, smiling, "that Mrs. Cleveland will not agree with you. The higher my estimate of the pleasure, the more am I bound to set the duty before it. But—though I am aware that husbands are apt to act as if marriage worked a forfeiture not only of a wife's property and personal freedom, but even of her claim to the courtesies of social life and the privileges of her sex—I did fancy that Cleveland was the last man to let himself be suspected of compliance with a fashion so much worse than many of the vulgar errors for which he displays a contempt proportionate to their popularity. I am accustomed to find the privilege of rendering the services of courtesy readily and graciously abandoned to me by husbands

and brothers; but I should have lost a large stake if any acquaintance had so far forgotten himself as to offer a bet that Mrs. Cleveland could ever be permitted to choose between a solitary walk and a chance guest's attendance. I think," he continued, turning to our hostess, "that I remember some very severe remarks of your husband's, many years ago, on the neglect of courtesy in domestic life; and I should like to know whether, like others, his subsequent experience of that life has changed his convictions or only perverted his practice."

A speech which many men might have resented, and which, to say the least of it, seemed to me to trench on the limits permitted to friendship, failed to disturb in the slightest degree the equanimity of our host, and equally failed to elicit an answer. But his wife replied for him, in a tone somewhat less soft and gentle than usual, and with slightly heightened colour.

"Algernon is as true to his creed on this matter as on all others, Mr. Gerard," she said. "As a Southerner, I have often been surprised at the want of courtesy shown by many English gentlemen to their wives; and have felt that I, as an English wife, should be pained to see my husband pay to other ladies as matter of course attentions of which he thought me unworthy. But Algernon would never allow me to go alone where he fancied I might wish for his company, except to church; and to church he would not escort the Queen."

"I am not quite sure of that, Ida," returned her husband. "The duty which loyal subjects owe to a Sovereign is utterly different, not merely in degree but in kind, from that imposed by the courtesy due either to

sex or rank. Say, however, if you will, that I would not attend a duchess or a princess to church; nor yet, I hope, on any occasion on which I should not offer to escort you."

"But," said Mrs. Dalway, "do you really mean that you think it wrong to go to church?"

"Of course," replied Cleveland, "I do not undertake to pronounce on such a point what is the duty of any one but myself. I say that I should be distinctly wrong in going; otherwise most assuredly I should not inflict on Ida, when we have no volunteer so eager and belligerent as Gerard, what I know must be the pain and mortification of going alone. It is not merely that I disbelieve utterly in the doctrine I should hear from the pulpit; that I could not give even the form of acquiescence to the Creed, or that there is much in the Liturgy from which I dissent. I should have not the slightest objection to attend the service of a mosque; but I could no more join or appear to join in that of the Church of England than in the worship of Seeva or of Jupiter.

"Do not look so startled, Ida, and do not be hurt or indignant. I do not intend in any way to compare the two forms of worship, except as regards my own relation to them. What I mean is simply this. I could join in any worship paid to the one Object to whom alone all religious or spiritual homage is in my opinion due; but worship paid to a creature appears to me distinct and simple idolatry. And idolatry is sinful, whether its object be a man or a monster; a saint like François Xavier, a devil like Ahriman, or a hideous image of abomination like Juggernaut."

“But,” said Gerard, “how can you call the service of the Anglican Church, or of any Christian Church, idolatrous?”

“Simply,” said Cleveland, “because it is not addressed to the Divine Father, but as a rule to Jesus Christ. Not regarding the latter as a Deity, or as different in nature and essence from other men, I can yet accept, so far as to participate therein, the Socinian direction of prayer ‘to the Father through the Son.’ But to join in prayer distinctly addressed to a human creature seems to me sheer idolatry; and idolatry more dangerous than the worship of Seeva or of Jove, when as now its object is not only a real historic personage, but one whose character has unquestionably a rare and peculiar charm for most men, however diverse their temper or opinions, who study it; and a hold on the imagination of the Many so strong and deep that it has caused them to deify him.”

Gerard paused for a moment, and then said, “I am not clear that there is not in the view you have just stated a confusion of thought whereof you are seldom guilty. The Church addresses her prayers to her Redeemer not as Man but as God. You will say that so are the prayers of Hindoos or other pagans addressed to their idols—not as blocks of wood or marble but as images representing supreme Spiritual powers. Granted; but there is an essential distinction. In addressing their prayers to the Son, the Church of England identify Him with the one Supreme Deity you yourself adore; so that in fact there is no more difference between their worship and yours than between yours and the Mohametan. In either case the distinction, traced to its essential meaning and clearly

defined, is only that of a name. Christians address the Creator under the name of Jesus, as the Moslem address Him under the name of Allah or the Jews under that of Jehovah."

"No," said Cleveland. "That is not a fair or full statement of the case. Jesus Christ was himself a real and distinct personage and is conceived as such; and his name, with all its human associations, is not merely another title for the invisible Supreme Being. All (except the Swedenborgians) who worship the Son do in fact distinguish him in their own minds from the Father. The incomprehensible, incredible, unthinkable subtleties of the Athanasian Creed do in some sense identify while striving at the same time to distinguish them; but throughout the Liturgy the Father and the Son are Persons or Personages just as distinct as in Roman Catholic prayers is either from any one of the Saints invoked as intercessors. As a general rule, the vulgar view of Christianity presents the Father as a tyrant—or at best a relentless Fate—from whose wrath and vengeance the Son has delivered or is to deliver his own worshippers. So far from really identifying the two in thought, most orthodox Christians place them, consciously or not, in direct antagonism. Even were it otherwise—even were the Christ of the Gospels really identified by his worshippers with the Supreme Being as in a sense are Buddha and Brahma—it is idolatry for those who believe Christ and Buddha to have been mere men (or even incarnate Angels) to join in worshipping either of them as a God."

"But," said Mrs. Dalway, "I suppose that, among the thoughtful men who attend the Church service at the instance of their families, very few really join in it

heartily and completely. They always make exceptions and mental reservations. Do you mean to condemn them; and if not, why cannot you do the like?"

"Simply because, in the first place," said Cleveland, "I am I, and they are they. Further, I have perhaps thought the problem out clearly; and most of them probably would prefer simple compliance to the needless trouble and inconvenient consequences of ascertaining their own minds and defining their views on such a question. Of course, in attending the Church, I need not join with my lips in her responses or repeat her creeds. But in presence of the congregation I must at least appear to do so; or else I must formally and distinctly express, by gesture or otherwise, my dissent from particular parts. To rise with my neighbours when the Creed is recited, to bow when the name of their Master occurs therein—to kneel (or adopt the fashionable substitute for kneeling) when prayers are addressed to him—is distinctly to 'bow myself in the house of Rimmon.' Now when Naaman asked that such bowing might be permitted to him, I agree with the author of 'Tom Brown' that the prophet did not grant the permission, though he evaded the issue and did not commit himself to a distinct refusal. Yet in that case there was the double excuse of a courtier's official duty to his Sovereign and of imminent and deadly peril in disobedience. Had the Assyrian courtier refused to bow himself before the idol when his master leaned on his hand in the temple, he would in the first place have affronted his sovereign by a formal violation of official duty, and in the second would almost certainly have incurred the penalty of immediate death. It was probably for these reasons that Elisha

bade him 'go in peace.' He did not choose, perhaps, to imperil the permanence of Naaman's inner conviction by exacting from the officer of an Asiatic despot so terrible a sacrifice. But now-a-days there can be no such plea for a concession of the same kind to public opinion or personal affection. I will not affront a whole congregation—and above all I will not hurt the religious feelings of those nearest and dearest to me—by going to church with them in order formally to sever myself from them in the whole or part of their worship. Still less will I go with them to bow myself in that which is to them the Temple of the true God, but to me necessarily the house of Rimmon."

"Certainly," answered Gerard; "no gentleman would take the former course. But pardon me if I say that I still fail to discern any sufficient reason for a refusal externally to accept or at least to acquiesce in the Liturgy of the Anglican Church. Of those who do so it is notorious that a great number object to single passages. Some, like ourselves, feel objections that go much further and deeper. This is so generally understood that no one is deceived by such compliance. On the one hand you cannot fear to deceive or to displease the Almighty, who sees the heart, by a formal concession to the feelings of others. He can hardly be supposed to care whether we do or do not sit down or stand up with others during a service which is to us an empty ceremonial, or even, in your phrase, an act of idolatry. You would not be making any false pretence of devotion to or defection from Him.

'Only a formula easy to patter,
And, God Almighty! what can it matter?'

"On the other hand, while it is true that your formal

acquiescence might be misinterpreted by a few of your less intelligent neighbours, it could hardly mislead any of them in any manner that need trouble your conscience. You are not a local chief or territorial superior. Those who know you sufficiently well to be much influenced by your acquiescence in their worship would know that you did not really and fully accept the doctrines it implies. The rest would not be confirmed in false opinions by your example, since probably they are either indifferent in the matter, or are too deeply convinced or too stolidly fixed by habit in their hereditary tenets to care whether one single parishioner, however distinguished by intellectual repute, agrees with them or not."

"You miss, or I failed to express," said Cleveland, "the grounds of my objection. I do not fear to be condemned as a hypocrite or a deserter from the truth by Him who can read the heart. Nor, again, do I care greatly what my neighbours may or may not think of me; certainly I should not dream of refusing on that account to gratify the slightest wish of my wife. But first, it is as you know a settled rule of ethics that what would be evil in practical effect if done by many—as would be the feigned assent of the whole class of independent thinkers to what they deem falsehood—is wrong in principle if done by any individual. A Christian could not plead his insignificance as an excuse for worshipping Kali or Indra. And moreover, in my opinion and to my feelings, worship, public or private, is the most solemn and sacred of human actions. To convert such an action into a falsehood and a mockery—to commit that idolatry which consists in paying formal wor-

ship to one who is not my God—grossly offends both my conscientious convictions and my unreasoned instincts. It seems an insolence to the Deity, and is in my view a sort of open disloyalty to my spiritual Sovereign. At any rate it is a thing which I simply could not do, any more than a devout Christian could profane the Eucharist. I may say, however, that, had I in view any possible influence of my example upon the uneducated majority of the congregation, I should in that respect feel less scruple in attending than in staying away. I do not think that it would be well—at least at present, or at any time during my probable life—that their hereditary faith should be disturbed or weakened; and in so far as the absence from church of men whose views I share, but whose eminence involves a fifty-fold responsibility, tends to enforce upon the multitude the disquieting knowledge that the intellect of the age more and more inclines to repudiate Christianity, I feel that, though doing our duty, we are doing harm rather than good.”

“I cannot understand that,” said Mrs. Dalway. “Surely you cannot wish to deceive them as to your own belief; nor can you wish to confirm their faith in doctrines you consider false.”

“Why not?” asked Cleveland.

“Because,” interposed Gerard, “in the first place, no gentleman can willingly lie, whether by act or word; and, in the next, because truth must always be wholesome, and falsehood always injurious.”

“Of course,” rejoined Cleveland, “I must not and cannot lie; and the more solemn the subject the less can I permit myself a falsehood or an equivocation

thereupon. But merely as a gentleman, not pretending to be a teacher in regard thereunto, I am under no obligation to speak at all on subjects upon which, save in private conversation, I prefer to be silent; and so long as I do not dishonour myself by spoken or acted falsehood, I should be very glad to avoid weakening in any way the Christian belief of others. I cannot accept the assumption that falsehood in matters of opinion—or more properly speaking speculative error—is necessarily always injurious; or that pure unadulterated truth is in every case and at all times beneficial.”

“I must say,” rejoined Gerard, “that you startle me not a little by expressing such a doubt. I can understand, though with some difficulty, that an absolute infidel or Atheist might take some such view. But you believe as devoutly as any Christian in the fundamental principles of religion—the existence of a Deity, the intelligent creation and Providential government of the Universe. How then can you suppose that essential falsehood on the highest topics can ever be wholesome, without imputing to the Divine Author of human thought and character a design to make falsehood a part of His scheme for the elevation of our nature and the development of His purposes? Do you not in such a suggestion actually accuse Him of deliberately planning to cheat His creatures; in plain language, to lie to them for their own good?”

“No,” said Cleveland. “If, for example, I were to contend that He has implanted in our hearts instincts and ideas essentially and permanently deceptive, I should probably be guilty of some such blasphemy. But I do nothing of the sort. I have never believed

that any idea, however general, which I hold to be substantially false has its root in, or is a necessary development of, those original instincts which we may fairly describe as directly implanted by His hand—as being, in a word, His utterances addressed to our hearts or consciences and intended for our guidance. For instance, I am convinced of the fallacy of that argument in favour of human immortality which is based on the assumption that the widespread belief therein is an innate original instinct of humanity. If that belief were truly instinctive, I should hold it impossible to deny the truth of such instinctive belief without also denying the truthfulness of Him who imparted it; and I could more easily doubt His being than His veracity. But I do not see anything inconsistent with His perfection in the belief that He has so ordered the course of human affairs that false or imperfect views may for a time and in certain stages of human progress be beneficial, while absolute or comparative truth would be premature. No one can carefully study the order of nature or the course of history without seeing that what is evil in one stage or epoch of the Divine scheme of development may be good in another. It is clear indeed that some terrible evils, moral as well as material, have been the instruments through which the ultimate good intended by that scheme has been worked out. For instance, national ambition and personal greed imposed on the world that Roman peace to which we owe a great part—I should say, to which we owe the possibility in its actual form and historic method—of modern civilization. Why may I not equally believe that theological

and moral illusions are part of the same machinery, and are in their time and place necessary and beneficial?"

"Possibly," answered Dalway. "But it is never the part of man so to presume on a fancied knowledge of the Divine policy as to support or even tolerate the evil for the sake of possible good. Those who achieved the Roman peace are not those whom we respect or admire, though they may have been the unconscious agents of Providence. Those who fought against it, Hannibal, Philopœmen, Vercingetorix, command our reverence, as we must believe they received the approval of the Almighty; though no doubt they were resisting the accomplishment of the Divine purposes. When the policy of Providential government requires the temporary triumph of a cause morally evil or unjust, that triumph is secured not by the acquiescence of good men in what they believe to be tyranny and wrong but by the defeat of their steadfast and heroic resistance; and it is this defeat that proves the victors to be useful in that place and time. You will not find in history that justification for the suppression of truth in the supposed interests of humanity which you yourself evidently perceive to be wanting in pure ethics. It is only Providence, with absolute foresight and unerring wisdom, that can have a right to set aside plain moral laws on grounds of immediate or ultimate expediency. To no fallible being is it permissible to do or even to allow evil that good may come."

Here Gerard and Mrs. Cleveland left us, and the rest of our party adjourned to the arbour at the edge of the lawn which in the fine summer weather formed our usual smoking-room.

CHAPTER XIV.

BEHIND THE VEIL!

ALL of us were for some time nearly silent, enjoying the exquisite beauty of the summer morning. We were presently joined by a friend and neighbour of Cleveland's, somewhat older than any of ourselves, who had spent great part of his youth and manhood as an active teacher of what was then called Secularism or Freethinking. Of late, however, he had retired from political and theological controversy, and settled himself alone in a tiny cottage among the Cumberland hills. He justified his withdrawal from the strife chiefly on the ground that the work which he considered essential was accomplished; that thought—which in his earlier days had been fettered not only by social persecution but by actual legal penalties—was now as free as even he could wish to see it. Perhaps, however, he was unconsciously influenced yet more powerfully by the low character, ignorance, and vulgarity of those who had succeeded himself and his former chief in the leadership of the movement in whose front rank he had once held no mean place. When Francis Sterne had been introduced to Dalway and myself, the conversation gradually relapsed almost into its former groove.

“ I am not,” said Cleveland, “ given to admire or even

to tolerate that pseudo-religious sentimentality with which so much of the Materialism of this age is tinged. There is nothing I abhor more thoroughly or despise more heartily than the tendency shown by several writers, whose real doctrines are absolutely Atheistic, to veil offensive and unpopular theories in the language of familiar creeds. I infinitely prefer the gross and brutal blasphemy of Bradlaugh to the disingenuous artifices by which even a man of the highest intellectual courage and finest culture like Matthew Arnold conveys or insinuates similar opinions in language stolen from Christianity. The arrogant bigotry of Positivism (or Nihilism) revolts me infinitely less than this endeavour to misappropriate attractions essentially belonging to a Faith the writer has rejected and is endeavouring to eradicate or undermine. If a man or a sect believe that in fact there is no intelligent personal Governor of the Universe, no conscious Supreme Being with whom man can enter into personal relations, let them have the intellectual loyalty to drop at once all the phraseology and the ceremonial of religion. It is at best half-conscious hypocrisy or sheer silliness to talk of 'worshipping' an abstract Humanity; even were not that average human character of which this ideal Humanity must be a glorified personification obviously worthy rather of contempt and disgust than of worship from thoughtful and cultivated men. Those who have satisfied themselves that there is no such thing as a soul in man, and that the mind is no more than the action of the brain-mechanism—the mere function of certain grey matter, and of nerve-fibres variously arranged and intertwined within the skull—should honestly tell us that our indi-

vidual existence is in every sense confined to some seventy or eighty years; and that according to the latest scientific doctrine the existence of the human race (and of all other highly-organized animals) is probably—even as compared with that of this earth—necessarily limited to a very brief period of time. When they talk of an impersonal ‘immortality’ in the memory of or in influence on future generations, they are either consciously bewildering their converts, or disloyally trying to cheat their own imagination and ours by turning a metaphor into the shadow of that which is nothing if not a living reality. Again I have no sympathy with the ‘poetic atheism’ of the Pantheist; and very little confidence in that sort of sentimental theology which professes a contempt for formal and ceremonial worship on the ground that a higher and more spiritual adoration is rendered by the spirit (or the brain) which simply delights in the sensuous beauty of creation. Nevertheless there is a real and very important truth, such as is seldom to be found in the artificial poetry of that school, in the line which speaks of some who

‘Look through Nature up to Nature’s God.’

No doubt the danger of those who stand aloof from formal and public worship is that they will look *on* and not *through* outward nature; and every one of us needs to be carefully and constantly on his guard against self-deception of this kind. Yet I must say that the beauty of a summer day, with the music of the brooks and the birds, the glory of the sky and of the flowers, does appear to me far more apt than the most splendid and best-adapted ecclesiastic ceremonial

to attune our mood to adoration of Him to whom we owe alike the wonders of nature and the capacity to enjoy them; a capacity not by any means limited to the appreciation of material beauty. I am not myself an astronomer, nor do I feel such profound interest in the starry heavens as affects some of my friends, whose astronomical knowledge is almost as limited as my own, with an enthusiasm I fail to share. But more than one of these friends has told me that he seldom looks on a clear midnight sky, or turns his telescope on a new celestial object of wonder, without realizing in his inmost heart the truth of that other line which declares that

'An undevout astronomer is mad.'

I suppose nevertheless that a decided majority of men, and certainly an overwhelming majority of women, are—as a matter of fact—more affected by the music of the organ and the grandeur of a temple built by human architects. Still those Christian worshippers who profess to feel as we do in regard to natural beauties and marvels, might at least give us credit for sincerity when we say that to many minds, rendered sensitive by the culture of generations, the works of the Creator's hand are more suggestive of His presence and providence, more excite our admiration and adoration and direct our thoughts and our emotions more immediately and earnestly towards Him, than the most august ceremonies or the most soul-stirring language with which the devotion of ages has enriched the services of the Church."

"It certainly should be so," answered Sterne, "if

there were anything consistent or logical in religion— if there were nothing artificial and unreal in the emotions supposed to be excited whether by the marvels of Nature or by the Liturgies on which the art and the eloquence of so many sacerdotal generations have been lavished. But I suspect that those who really feel themselves moved to conscious direct devotion by the beauties of the earth or the heavens are comparatively very few. They seem to belong almost exclusively to a small and exceptional class of minds, to be found chiefly among those whose originally powerful and sensitive intellects have been cultivated in a very high degree as well as in a somewhat unusual manner by the study at once of science and of poetry. Moreover I incline to think that even their moods of devotion are very brief, and perhaps somewhat far between. Furthermore, in this climate the days of summer music and beauty and the nights of starlight splendour are sadly few; and he whose worship can only be paid under such conditions has what you must consider as dangerously long intervals during which he is liable to relapse into utter worldliness and practical indifference. The Christians at least have the advantage, if it be one, of being reminded at stated intervals—not dependent on the weather of a most ungenial region—that they have what they call souls, which ought in church to forget for a while the state of their ledgers or the fashion of their dress. They are there taught to expect or long to pass into a world from which every single object and purpose that really excites their desire or commands their interest in this life is to be utterly eliminated. I am constantly puzzled to imagine how

they would employ themselves, or how they would endure the monotonous novelty of their being, should their so-called hopes be realized."

"No doubt," said Cleveland, "a good deal of your irony is just; and a still larger part of it, if not actually just, is, in a controversial aspect, fairly justified by what we see and know of the utter inconsistency between Christian profession on Sunday and Christian practice during the week. But there are some to whom the next life is as real as this, and who have so employed themselves in this world that we may fairly believe that they would find no unendurable change in their habits of thought and action if they were transferred ever so abruptly to another. Such of course are and must always be a small minority. If it were otherwise, this earth would be more closely assimilated to Heaven than seems to accord either with the purposes of Providence as discerned in the actual government of this world of ours, or with the promises of the Christian Scriptures."

"I did not know," said Sterne, "that you were among those who supposed themselves to have any special information regarding a supernatural futurity. Nor should I have expected to find a firm believer in Providential government objecting to sanguine hopes for the earthly future of mankind as inconsistent with the tendency of that government, or as requiring from it more than it is capable of realising, at least on this earth."

"You know," replied Cleveland, "that I have no confident or definite convictions respecting any other world than this; but I do not expect or believe that this

life can ever approach the celestial happiness commonly attributed to the other. In speaking of that other, I spoke of course hypothetically, and rather in reference to what theologians assume than to any fixed ideas of my own."

"But," inquired Sterne, "do you seriously believe that there are a dozen Christians in the largest congregation who would not find themselves, within a few weeks intolerably bored in Heaven, at least in such a Heaven as we are taught in churches and chapels to expect? Putting aside the grotesque aspects of that Heaven—not condescending even to ridicule the idea of sitting on clouds and singing hymns—the notion of a life

' Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end ;'

forgetting also the blasphemous as well as grotesque absurdities of a Spurgeon, who intends to spend so many thousands of years contemplating each of the Five Wounds—the bliss of the ideal Heaven is to consist exclusively in perpetual worship. Now I admit that what the very few Theists in whose account of their inner life I can implicitly trust have told me—and what I have seen now and then during public or personal devotion in the faces of rapt enthusiasts, generally Catholics—enforces on me a belief that there may be an ecstatic happiness in worship; but this can only last for a very short time, shorter even than the period of other ecstasies. And the deficiency or reaction which so limits its duration is not physical or even exclusively intellectual—does not proceed from mental or bodily infirmity. If it be due to the organization of the

brain, so equally is the mood of worship itself. It is evidently a simple impossibility for human nature to sustain those exalted moods, whatever their direction, for any length of time; and therefore I take it that, as I have said, the immense majority, nay nearly the whole body even of devout Christians would be mortally 'bored' in their own Heaven. Nay, more, I cannot but suspect that they themselves are in their own despite 'unconsciously conscious' that it would be so. The language, the habitual forms of expression, the phrases which evidently conform to the real thought and not to the formal creed of sincere Christians, are scarcely more consistent with their declared belief in a Heaven of intense happiness than are those of unbelievers or of ordinary worldlings. Either they do not thoroughly and earnestly believe in eternity as they believe in time, or they have at heart an unacknowledged preference for this Vale of Tears over the Celestial City of their hymns and prayers; they are no more willing to go to Heaven than sinners are to take their departure for Hell, or sceptics and men and women of the world simply to cease to be. If you or I believed in Heaven as we believe in to-morrow, how could we be afraid of death or care for our own sakes to prolong this life? If we knew, or believed with absolute confidence, that we should wake to-morrow to a joy such as we have never yet known—if, for example, we were about to marry the object of passionate long-cherished love—we should feel in falling asleep a delight like that which children find in going to bed on the eve of some unprecedented treat. But those who solemnly affirm—nay, those who have actually proved by devoting their lives to an un-

profitable profession or to continual self-sacrifice—the sincerity of their doctrine that death is merely the transit to a joy immeasurably greater than that of the happiest bridegroom—do shrink from ‘the momentary sleep of death’ with a horror greater than the most sensitive of opium-eaters ever felt when sinking into those horrible dreams of protracted misery which De Quincey describes with so much intensity of feeling and vividness of language. It is not because they doubt their own salvation; for we see this dread of death just as strong in Calvinists profoundly convinced of their own election as in men who must feel assured that (if there be any truth in the creed they learned in childhood and have never dared to throw off) they must be going into eternal torment. It seems to me impossible to reconcile the frame of mind in which even sincere Christians—men and women who would probably rather submit to martyrdom than deny their Master, and who do really submit to severe restraint and make daily sacrifices for their faith—regard death, with any true inward belief on their part in a future of perfect happiness; with such belief in eternal joy as each of us entertains, I will not say in to-morrow, but even in next year. We see that such people unhesitatingly sacrifice their worldly present to their worldly future. They will pinch and toil and deny themselves to accumulate wealth for their age or for their children. Few of them will work half so hard or sacrifice half so much for their eternal future; yet for that they will often make serious sacrifices. How is it then that, while they would be delighted at the thought that their dearest earthly wishes were about to be fulfilled after a brief sleep, they are anxious to post-

pone as long as possible the realization of delights said to be not merely deeper and higher in kind but infinitely more intense in degree than any that earth can give? Either they feel at heart that the joy will be unsatisfactory, or they have no such assurance of its reality as they feel in regard to a temporal future which, after all, death may intercept. I cannot but think that there is a complete and utter hollowness not merely about the language but about the actual inner thoughts of such persons. Surely there is a monstrous inconsistency in their words, views, and acts. The martyrs of old died in torture for their faith; but then they certainly did not fear death even if they shrank from its attendant agonies. On the contrary, their faith in Heaven was such that in hundreds of instances they invited and provoked not merely death, but prolonged torments from which brave men, and men indifferent to the mere termination of life, would have shrunk with horror. But now-a-days, though we should almost certainly find men and women less unwilling to be martyred than to renounce their hope of Heaven, we should not find one in a million who would regard the near promise of the quietest and easiest death with that joy which scores of martyrs in the first century evinced with unquestionable sincerity at the prospect of being cast to the lions or burnt by a slow fire. Nay, we do not find among Christians even such willingness to die for their Faith as still gives a formidable power to Mohammedan fanaticism. I have always thought that this difference is partly due to the different representations of Heaven held out by the preachers of the two creeds. To the Moslem is promised a life of those delights he can best

appreciate on earth. To the orthodox Churchman or Evangelical Dissenter his spiritual guide proffers an eternity of Sunday morning, the glories of a majestic cathedral or the noisy piety and bare walls of a Bethel; and the poor layman, conscious that he is apt to find the Liturgy too long and the sermon irresistibly soporific, can't fully persuade himself to rejoice in the prospect for which he must all too soon renounce the honest work and real pleasures of the week-day world."

"No doubt," said Cleveland, "there is much in the idea of Heaven, as depicted by Christian preachers, to render it unattractive to their hearers. Hell itself could hardly frighten the children of Evangelical parents more thoroughly than the prospect of a continual Sabbath with all the Sabbatarian associations of their homes; forbidden toys, long sermons, Collects and Hymns to learn, and what seems to them interminable confinement on hard benches—a confinement worse than that of ordinary prisoners inasmuch as they must preserve a stiff and uncomfortable attitude and a countenance of affected gravity. I believe that the little girl who asked whether, if she were very good in Heaven, she might not hope for leave to go down and play in Hell on Saturday afternoons, only expressed with especial clearness and pathos feelings which nine out of ten children of Puritan parents entertain, and would, but for fear of a whipping, vent in words still stronger if not so telling. Even those adults who really find pleasure in public worship here feel that two hours thereof at a time becomes wearisome. They are taught to suppose that an eternity of the same thing is to be pleasant to them;

but each must inwardly feel that it can become so only to a self so utterly changed that he can scarcely realize or regard it as a self at all. Among those who 'have not so learned' Heaven I have known one here and there whose language and thought were in partial if not perfect accord with their creed; who really regarded death without any other fear than might attach to the probable attendant pain, or to the uncertainty of a journey into a land whose existence they never doubted, which they believe to be infinitely delightful, but which is nevertheless wholly strange and new. I have known those who would have felt no horror and no strong repugnance if told that they would die suddenly and painlessly within a few hours; and who, if they had no especial ties of deep affection binding them to earthly homes, would receive such news with honest pleasure, though perhaps with pleasure alloyed by a certain awe."

"Still," said Sterne, "you will acknowledge that such cases are very rare exceptions. Nine in ten, I should say, even of the small minority whose belief is proved to be in one sense at least sincere—who demonstrate that they think they believe by their sacrifice of pleasures incompatible with Christian hopes—do not speak, save when put on their guard, as if that belief formed a real part of their mental constitution, or gave the tone to their thoughts on life and death, time and eternity. If men really believed in Heaven and Hell as they believe in a future of earthly wealth or poverty, they would not speak as if there were any peculiar merit in taking measures to secure the one and avoid the other. Indeed, the tremendous

importance of the alternative would so far outweigh all the prudential considerations of the present world that no civilized man, inwardly feeling it to be a practical reality, could do otherwise than sacrifice instinctively and unhesitatingly as a matter of course this world to the next—seventy years to eternity. Savages we know cannot realize a distant future any more than a large number; and cannot therefore make up their minds steadily to save seed-corn, or undergo the labour of cultivation, for the sake of a harvest to be reaped six months afterwards. But among civilized and educated men the habit of sacrificing the present to the future is so far established that they constantly and habitually make provision for remote contingencies almost as instinctively as do bees and ants, scarcely realizing that conduct so natural involves a sacrifice. If, then, any civilized man believed in the Christian eternity as he believes in an earthly future which after all he may never see, he would regulate his life here with a view to that which is to begin at death just as naturally and as unhesitatingly as he now prepares for an earthly reward ten, or twenty, or thirty years distant. But it is especially with regard to death itself that the language and conduct alike of the most devout and the most worldly believers are signally inconsistent and incompatible with their professed, and not dishonestly professed, convictions. According to their profession, nay, according to a fixed conviction which they at least honestly believe themselves to hold, death is only a passage from one state of existence to another. Yet, when not regarding it from a religious standpoint—when not, as I said

just now, put on their guard—they speak of it in language absolutely Pagan and evidently regard it as the end of all things. If they do not fear it, it is because and when they are, it would seem, really half tired of existence itself. When they speak of the dead or of the approaching death of the living, you see that their real instinctive thought looks only to the grave and not beyond it. To them, as to the Pagan, death is the most absolute separation. Otherwise, how should an aged parent mourn inconsolably over the death of a child? We know that the death of dearly loved children while the parents are still living is felt as one of the most terrible of human calamities. Yet from the Christian standpoint it is exactly the reverse. A man of seventy loses a favourite child of eighteen or twenty. If death be merely the passage to another life, they will meet again within some half-a-dozen years, whereas they had reasonably expected that the death of the parent in due course would separate them for half a century. Nevertheless they mourn over this alleged prospect of speedy reunion as over the horror of an irreparable, final parting. Again, according to the Christian creed, death can hardly be a calamity even to the hardened sinner, since it can matter very little whether he enter eternal torture thirty years sooner or later. To the redeemed it is the greatest of blessings. Yet an aged parent will see with comparative equanimity his child depart to Australia, to the hardships and trials of a colonial life, feeling assured that they will never meet again on this side the grave. If that child goes to Heaven instead, so that they may hope to meet again in a very few years, the parent's heart is broken. How

can you reconcile this preference of a long separation to a short one, of a doubtful and distant journey to a short and safe one, if the heart feel as the lips speak: if the parties believe in the existence of Heaven as they believe in that of Australia?"

"Frankly," answered Cleveland, "I do not think that the common language of Christians admits of reconciliation with their professed belief. Logically belief in immortal life and the common feelings respecting death are of course incompatible. Morally, they appear so; yet as matter of fact we know that the future life is honestly believed in and hoped for by millions; nay, that they never admit to themselves a doubt of it. Somehow or other, then, these two seemingly irreconcilable ideas are compatible, for they exist together."

"Nay," said Sterne, "they do not I suspect actually co-exist without conflicting, but succeed each other as different states, sometimes violent revulsions, of thought in the same mind: or, as we sometimes see in other examples of mutually destructive ideas, occupy stations in the inner world of thought so far apart that they never affect each other. Such a mind, dwelling in practical mood on the world of visible realities where-with it is familiar, or giving utterance to the unchecked impulses of primary human instinct, recognises in death the utter end of that existence with which alone it is habitually conversant; in a religious mood, when recalled to the ideas implanted by education, it strives more or less successfully to follow in thought the path of the disembodied soul beyond the impenetrable darkness into a sphere whose conditions, whose very

existence, the intellect has never questioned, the imagination never realized."

"Perhaps," answered Cleveland, "the secret of your puzzle lies in those last words. People believe in Heaven—that is to say, they accept the doctrine and believe in it as we believe for example in the enormous distances separating star from star. But—as those enormous distances present no definite idea to our minds and therefore cannot affect our conceptions of space—so men's theoretical faith fails to impress their imagination, or affect their instinctive tendency to confine their habitual thoughts to familiar realities. The creed accepted by the reason or impressed on the memory fails to influence the unconscious imagination which paints in cold outline or in vivid colours those pictures which alone enable us to regard as realities—to realize—the remote or the unknown. Yet, while nearly all of us fail so to realize a future beyond the grave as that it shall seriously influence our feelings and control our way of regarding life and death, we find it at least equally impossible effectively to realize in thought our own annihilation; or to imagine a time when we shall not be or think, an universe from which our personality shall have been for ever blotted out; above all, selves no longer conscious of self-existence."

"It is true," said Sterne, "that we cannot think of ourselves as annihilated or dead; that we can at most imagine ourselves disembodied and departed from this life and from the visible universe. Many illusions and many false arguments owe their origin to this inability. I fancy that half the anxiety, even of the ancient world and of ignorant people nowadays—all the anxiety

felt, at any rate, by intelligent men—respecting the disposal or treatment of their dead bodies, arises from an inability to realize completely that their bodies will at death cease to be or to contain themselves. Otherwise—since whether the self, the *ego*, be an independent spirit or a mere function of the brain, it will equally have departed or ceased from the body—why should any one care more for his own dead form than for an old suit of clothes? The sentiment so common even among the most unsentimental and most sceptical, that we should wish our nearest and dearest to visit our graves, implies a similar superstitious illusion; an unacknowledged feeling that we ourselves shall be there and be conscious of the love still shown to us. Nay, I believe that what is called the instinctive or innate belief in immortality—the faith, more or less distinct and confident, of nearly all tribes and races in a future life—proceeds in no small measure from the same peculiar limitation imposed on imagination by the natural, perhaps necessary conditions of thought.”

“But,” said Mrs. Dalway, “do you think it natural (since it seems so impossible) to be indifferent about the fate of our bodies after death? Christians perhaps from their standpoint should be indifferent, because they believe that their souls or selves will be far away. Perhaps, too, sceptics should be almost equally stoical, since they are convinced that their consciousness, their *ego*, will at any rate not remain with the corpse, or be affected by evidences of unkindness in the survivors. And yet we all feel so keenly about the dead bodies of our friends that it can hardly be natural or possible to be careless about our own.”

"I myself," said Cleveland, "am utterly careless both about the disposal of my own remains and about those of my friends. If I have any remnant of feeling on the subject it is a horror of the earthen grave, which I believe arises solely from a nervous unreasoning fear of being buried alive."

"I know," said Mrs. Dalway, "that you are especially precise in the statement of a paradox; but I can hardly believe that you would be indifferent as to what became of the dead body of a very dear and intimate friend, say of your wife or child."

"Ah!" replied Cleveland, "a different feeling comes into play there. Men feel very keenly and very exceptionally about the physical forms of women dear to them. We attach something of sanctity not merely to the personality but to the person of a wife, a sister, or a daughter. In respect of the wife there is no doubt a different and deeper feeling—something beside and distinct from mere reverence—for the body, upon which I need not dwell. But the instincts inherited from chivalry force us to regard the very physical forms of women, especially of women belonging to us, as something sacred, which in death as in life must not be roughly touched, which it would be intolerable to our feelings to see exposed, neglected, or even approached by coarse or indifferent hands. Such a feeling has no relation to the question we are discussing. The man who would without a pang contemplate the probability that his own corpse, or even that of his father or son, would be devoured by wolves on a battle-field, would revolt most passionately from the thought of an affront to the dead body of a woman loved or revered

in death as in life. Go on, Sterne, with your argument: for this digression can at most serve to clear away an incidental confusion."

"I say then," said Sterne, "that we can think of an universe existing apart from ourselves, of the entire creation as a whole to which we no more belong, if we forget ourselves entirely. But there seems always to be a latent conception of ourselves as conscious of the Cosmos we have quitted. We cannot conceive of ourselves as non-existent, because the conception of self inseparably involves the idea of existence and of consciousness. We can think of our *ego* only as a conscious entity; and by that primary and paramount law of thought which renders a contradiction unthinkable, it is impossible that we should realize our own nonentity."

"Does not that very inability to realize annihilation," said Mrs. Dalway, "constitute a familiar and powerful argument against annihilation? Those who use that argument say that instinct is never false."

"Pardon me," said Sterne. "You miss the very point of my reasoning. My point is this, that the inability to conceive our own nonexistence is not a special instinct but the necessary consequence of a general law of thought. We can—at least, I do not know that we cannot—conceive the annihilation of a friend, especially if we have seen his body burned to ashes; but we cannot, and probably no thinking being can, conceive of the same object at once as existent and nonexistent. Now to conceive self is to conceive, to imagine, to realize the one existence of which we are actually and directly—not mediately—conscious; conscious not

through inference from our senses, but inevitably and inherently. We cannot think of an existence as non-existent; therefore we cannot conceive of our own annihilation, because we are to our own minds essentially and absolutely conscious existences. In a word, conscious existence being the very essence of selfhood, to think of ourselves as nonentities we must cease to think of ourselves at all."

"I admit," said Cleveland, "the full force of your argument, so far as it goes. I admit that no reasonable inference in favour of immortality can be drawn from our inability individually to conceive our nonexistence. This seems to be, as you say, not a special instinct, but an inevitable, inseparable corollary or consequence of one of the necessary, radical and, so far as we can judge, probably universal laws of thought. As I am inclined to believe that these laws are identical in the lowest and highest—as I doubt whether the Creator Himself could have made two and two five, or ordained a triangle with two right angles—so I doubt whether any thinking entity could think of himself as having ceased to be. But I do not think that this limitation of our conceptions has any relation to that widespread vague belief in a spiritual life which prevails so extensively among the most various and distant human families. That belief can hardly have been derived by one from another, but must be either an innate instinct or a consequence of almost universal conditions. I fancy that the generally prevalent conception of a Hades, wherein some sort of *eidolon*, whether the shadow or the soul, continues to exist after death, arises from a quasi-instinctive conviction of the con-

tinued existence rather of others than of ourselves. For some reason or other few human races — till their natural instinctive feelings are overruled by the results of deliberate thought and artificial education — seem able to believe that their dead have ceased to be. We know how the ablest of those sceptics who have most profoundly studied the growth of human thought are generally disposed to explain this persistent though very indefinite and shadowy belief in a future existence which in many cases is hardly to be called life. They tell us that savages cannot discriminate clearly between the images seen in dreams and those received by the waking senses; that, dreaming of the dead, savages forthwith assume that the dead have been with them. I cannot think that even savages are quite so stupidly and perversely inconsistent. They dream that the living meet them, speak with them, act with or upon them, and when they wake they find at once that these visions of the night are mere delusions. Why should they assume or accept a different, nay, an opposite idea respecting the dead? Red Cloud, for example, dreams that Spotted Tail who is living, and Hard Heart who is dead, went with him last night moose-hunting. He realizes that the whole was an illusion; that there was no moose-hunt, and that Spotted Tail was at the time a hundred miles away. Why must he suppose that Hard Heart was actually with him? Again, the fact of death—the consciousness of separation—makes so deep an impression, that as a rule we dream fifty times of the living for once that we dream of the dead. It seems incredible that one dream impression—nowise distinguishable from others — should be arbitrarily

accepted as a reality, while all the rest are clearly known to be unreal."

"I had," said Dalway, "a very curious experience in regard to the dream-visions of the dead. When it happened, I had lost only one dear friend. Long after her death I dreamt of her, fully aware in my dream that she was dead. But of that dream I remember no more. More than two years later, in the midst of visions of scenery and persons certainly nowise connected with her or with any association that could recall her, I became conscious of some one coming into the room through a curtained doorway, and looking up saw her before me as in life. I exclaimed, 'Why, ——, you are dead; how is it that I see you as alive?' She answered, 'Because you are asleep.' Thereupon I puzzled myself for a moment whether I were in truth asleep or awake, and then went on with my dream. Can you see any natural explanation of so curious an incident?"

"Only one," said Cleveland. "Some people dream much more vividly than others and believe while dreaming more fully in the reality of their dreams. You probably belong to the class of dreamers who are often made half aware, by the dimness and vagueness of dream-impressions, that they are dreaming and not waking? Well then, the reappearance of your friend suggested half-consciously to your mind the fact that you had formerly seen her in a dream, and—as constantly happens in dreams—your own idea, embodied in words, was put into the mouth of the dream-image."

"But," said Sterne, "if you refuse to believe that the idea of Hades has arisen from dreams, do you believe that it is really the survival of some primeval revela-

tion, or the effect of an instinct given to man at that date—to whatever stage of race-development it be assigned—when he is held somehow suddenly to have become an immortal creature; or at least what St. Paul calls ‘a living soul’?”

“No,” said Cleveland. “On the whole I find it impossible to believe in any primæval revelation. Your other alternative of an impressed instinct, conferred at some particular stage of human development through those natural agencies by which the Creator usually or always works, does not appear to me incredible or extravagant; but at the moment I can think of no evidence in its favour.”

“Then,” said Sterne, “to what do you attribute the fact that remote races all over the world do, as a rule though not universally, believe in the continued existence of the dead?”

“You will be greatly surprised,” said Cleveland, “by my answer. I believe it to be due mainly, and perhaps entirely, to actual if not real phenomena; to those visions of the departed which—however we may choose to explain them—are among the best established of ‘occult mysteries,’ *i.e.*, of exceptional human experiences. Scarcely any fact in history not attested and recorded by eye-witnesses is more certain than that in every age men have seen what are called ghosts—that is to say distinctly apparent images of the departed; often so exactly and in every respect resembling, as to have been momentarily mistaken for, the living forms of the individuals they represented, whenever the seer has for an instant forgotten or has not been aware that the latter were dead. You may if you choose say that

all these visions have been pure delusions; though there are strong reasons against any such sweeping assertion,—several of the appearances being seen by two or more persons at once, or authenticated by contemporaneous death or other circumstances under conditions which render the favourite explanation of sceptics—mere (or accidental) coincidence—incompatible with the law of probabilities. But whether real or not, whether often due to external actual images presented to the retina or always the work of the seer's imagination, such appearances have been in every age sufficiently frequent to render them a subject of perplexity to impartial and unbigoted inquirers. The almost universal belief of races and ages the most remote from each other in the existence of a soul surviving the dissolution of the body, coincident as it is with an almost equally general concurrence of testimony avouching the occasional apparition of the dead to the eyes of the living, seems to me to indicate that the continued existence of the departed has been believed because the evidence—at least to primitive races among whom the habit of distrust and scepticism was not yet established—sufficed to prove that the departed could and did reappear.”

“Do you really think,” said Sterne, “that there is any solid evidence of the reappearance of the dead; any evidence that will bear cross-examination; in short, that would not be absolutely excluded by the rule of our law, rejecting what is called hearsay? Does it not in almost every case come to us at second-hand, and without the verification of details or the attestation of names?”

‘No,’ replied Cleveland. “Your representation of the case is not correct. In a certain sense all historical evidence is second-hand. In that sense, and in that sense only, the same epithet may be applied to the best-attested ghost stories. But as we accept confidently the assertions of contemporary historians with regard to matters of general notoriety or familiar to many living when the history was published, provided these statements were not then and there disputed; so I think we must on the whole accept as personal evidence any report of personal experience published by an author to whom the story was related by an eye-witness, provided that the book appeared during the life of that eye-witness and that no correction was made. This is the case of all that evidence with regard to apparitions of the dead or dying on which I place any reliance. You would be, I think, somewhat surprised—I certainly was so when I began to study the question carefully—to find what a considerable mass of such evidence exists. It is little known because it is much scattered, and the books in which some of the best information on the subject is collected are little read, and have dropped to a great extent out of circulation. Moreover, the authors of many such books—like Robert Dale Owen, and even Mrs. Crowe—do not know what evidence means. For example, Mr. Owen says in substance ‘X, a young girl, told me that she and nineteen of her schoolfellows witnessed a most curious kind of apparition, the double presence of a governess at the same moment in the school-room and in the garden commanded by its window. *Here is an*

apparition attested by twenty witnesses. Of course it is nothing of the sort. As regards X, the story is that of a single eye-witness. As regards her school-fellows, the evidence is second-hand, and not only second-hand but given through the first witness; so that it has little or no weight as confirmation of her story. If she lied, she would lie equally as regards the fact itself and the testimony of her companions. This is a fair example of the value of Mr. Owen's judicial capacity, and of the critical faculty of some other collectors of 'supernatural' stories. Nevertheless, carefully sifting what they do tell us and what we learn from more discriminating writers or from personal evidence, we find no inconsiderable amount of testimony respecting the reappearance of the dead which is essentially of the historical character; which is quite as good as that on which we accept any fact in history the truth of which was from the necessity of the case known only to one, two, or three persons. But the vital points to which I would call your attention are two. First, a proportion of these ghost stories so large that the law of chances excludes the notion of mere accident are confirmed by coincidences more or less striking. Secondly, the ghostly apparitions belonging severally to races the most distant and periods the most remote tend to confirm each other by the presence of certain identical characteristics not likely to have been copied by one imaginant from others or to have occurred spontaneously to the imagination of numerous different ghost-seers in different ages and countries. I believe that no one who has read the evidence or any considerable part of it will attempt to

explain it by supposing that either seers or narrators bore false witness. The negative or sceptical explanation with which we have to deal is illusion. I think I am fairly entitled to say that a considerable number of cases wherein a person was seen at or near the moment of death by relatives hundreds of miles away are authenticated beyond reasonable doubt. We must admit that the appearance was actually presented to the mind if not to the eyes of the ghost-seer; and presented so distinctly and vividly that, except when the impossibility of physical presence was obvious and remembered at the instant, the apparition was completely and unhesitatingly mistaken for the person it represented, until it disappeared or in some other manner demonstrated its unsubstantial nature. I rely only on the cases in which no immediate expectation of the death was entertained by the seer. You can account for these only by supposing that the seer, without the shadow of reason, was—generally for the first and last time in life—deceived by a spectral illusion; one of the rarest forms of insane impressions on sane minds; and that by some extraordinary coincidence this most often momentary hallucination was contemporary with the death of the person whose form was supposed to be seen. This coincidence might happen once in ten thousand cases; but it is invoked to explain nine thousand nine hundred and ninety. Now, while the number of instances in which apparitions are said to have occurred at the moment of death, or just after, forms by far the largest element in the entire number of apparitions so attested as to be worth taking into

account, the well-verified instances of visions not coincident with the death are fewer and are for the most part attended by circumstances of a character for which mere illusion will hardly account. It seems then,—putting aside another class of visions, those peculiar apparitions of the living where circumstances contradict the theory of illusion *—that nine cases in ten of apparitions of the dead or dying, alleged by sceptics to be spectral illusions, are nearly contemporaneous with the death of the person appearing. This no mathematician, nay, no person of common sense, can possibly explain as mere chance coincidence. If there be no connection between the death and the apparition, if the coincidence be not causal but accidental, it ought not to occur more than say once in ten thousand cases. The evidence on this point is so overwhelming that after a frank and full study of the facts, some who disbelieve in the soul altogether have admitted a belief or a half-belief that, somehow or other, appearances at the moment of death to friends and relatives are under exceptional conditions possible. If such apparitions—by far the largest class—were the only ones whose objective nature was attested by circumstantial evidence we might grant that the question was at least doubtful whether they do or do not afford any proof of a soul

* Few people are aware how common are recorded instances of apparitions of the living, in which the urgent wish of the person seen to meet the seer, or some other verification independent of the seer's volition or imagination, render the idea of illusion wholly unsatisfactory. Even so practical and unimaginative a writer as Mr. Russell, the Prince of Correspondents, relates such an experience in his "Diary" of the Franco-German War, as occurring during the later days of his sojourn at Versailles.

separate or capable of separation from the body. But there are also many examples of the apparition of persons some time dead authenticated by attendant circumstances. From the nature of the case these can comparatively seldom admit of proof totally excluding, as in the other class of apparitions, the idea of illusion; inasmuch as the confirmation of coincidence and contemporaneity is here excluded. There are however signal exceptions. There are some apparently authentic cases on record of apparitions long after death but before the death was known to the seer. There are also a limited number of cases in which the reality of the apparition was—I will not say proved, but—strongly indicated by various attendant conditions, for instance, by information given or effects following. I have never been able fully to satisfy myself that these instances are so sustained by irrefragable evidence, and so decisive in themselves, as to prove a future life or to render it irresistibly probable. It is very difficult to weigh against each other masses of logical evidence of utterly unlike nature. The assured, indubitable return of one single person from behind the Veil would be decisive against any amount of *à priori* improbability. But no such return can be absolutely certain, if only because witnesses may lie, or lying and personation may be possible to some invisible agents—as it is said to be the case with the so-called ‘spirits’ of the Table-movement. Thus the proof afforded by the best authenticated *revenant* is reduced in kind; brought down from the plane of certain demonstration to that of moral probability. And then comes in the counter-

vailing weight of physical probabilities, whose comparative value it is hard to assign. That weight falls short of demonstration, and owes its influence chiefly to analogy, to our recollection how similar accumulated evidence has swept away so many of the strongest outworks of orthodoxy; but the physical facts are certain, while the most impartial among us—however contemptuous of that pretentious perversity of science which refuses to examine evidence on the sole ground that it conflicts with received ideas of the possible—must feel that a doubt hangs over the fundamental fact on the other side, the objective existence of the apparitions. Ascertained physiological and psychological phenomena tend to suggest if not to prove that every element of human life and personality, from nervous force and reflex action up to the moral sense and the highest functions of conscience, is subject to physical influences and liable to be disturbed or destroyed by physical causes. It is a significant fact that the arguments whereon a man like Bishop Butler relied to sustain belief in the existence of a soul are deprived of nearly all their force by subsequent study of the functions of the brain and nervous system. But of this I feel sure: there is such evidence of the reappearance of the dead and distant apparition at the hour of death as would by itself suffice to account for an almost universal belief in a soul and a future existence, in every community in which civilization has not rendered the critical and negative temper clearly predominant, and produced in the higher intellect of the age a predetermination that no evidence can prove a miracle.”

"Now," said Mrs. Dalway, "I should like to know how common these ghost appearances really are. They always seem to me to be told at second or third hand. Somebody knows somebody who was told by somebody else that a relative or friend of the original teller saw a ghost. We may be quite sure that in such cases we do not get the exact story as it was told by the actual seer; and very likely if we had that story we should find that what seems the decisive evidence of its truth was imported into it after it left the lips of the primary witness. Did any one of us four, our wives or husbands, ever come into direct personal contact with a ghost or a ghost story?"

"Yes," was the reply elicited from one of the party. "It is a curious fact that several attempts were made by competent artists to paint in her youthful matronhood the portrait of a near connection of my own. In every case but one the failure was signal, and the result a wretched daub—mostly so bad that those familiar with the painter's usual style and previous achievements could not recognize or accept it as his. Every one of the artists died before or soon after the portrait was completed, save a single amateur who was brought to death's door by a long and severe illness. I cherish no superstitions, and least of all could I, having once definitely appreciated the meaning of the Theory of Chances, be affected by the superstition of "luck"—the delusion that the recurrence of an evidently accidental combination in the past affords any indication, one way or another, as to its repetition in the future. Still I doubt whether I could voluntarily take upon myself the responsibility—at least, without stating what has

already occurred—of inviting another attempt. Well, before painter A. had quite finished my friend's portrait he began those of her infant sister and brother. He was consumptive, and very irritable. A servant came into the room where he was painting, and passed behind him to look at the picture. He spoke sharply to her ; and this was the only meeting between them, the only incident which could in anywise impress the thought of him on her mind. A few weeks later, after illness had interrupted his work for some time, this servant, going to open the basement shutters in the morning, saw the painter standing with his back to the kitchen grate, after one window at least was open. Startled, and knowing that he could have no legitimate business there at that hour if he were there at all, she ran back and fell, half fainting, with a scream, on the kitchen stairs. Her mistress went down, found her there, and heard the story. Within a few hours afterwards, either that day or the next, the mistress and I myself heard from an eye-witness the particulars of the painter's death on that very morning, and apparently about that very moment. The death, from suffocation, was sudden and very horrible. The painter's last speech was a request to be lifted that he might see himself in the glass, and I believe he died in that act. But the last, or nearly the last, topic on which he spoke eagerly a few minutes before he died was his anxiety to finish the portraits in question. Here you have a ghost-story in which hallucination seems morally impossible, in the absence of anything that could provoke or evoke any spectre, and of anything that could suggest the idea of the artist to the mind of the ghost-seer at the moment ; and

the relator was in the house at that very time, intimate with all the family and conversant with all the facts. Whatever incidents in this story did not come within my own immediate knowledge were related to me at the time, by the lady who found her servant fainting on the stairs immediately after seeing the apparition. The strange account of the spectral visit was known throughout the household some hours before we heard of the painter's death. The circumstances of his death were told to the lady by an eye-witness within a very short period after it occurred. None of us were expecting such tidings at that time. The servant was most unlikely even to have known that the artist was seriously ill, and certainly had no such interest in him as could account for a spectral illusion taking his form."

"I incline to think," said Cleveland, "that there are not fifty households, taken at random among those classes to whom hereditary culture has restored some of the impressibility of primitive man, in one or more of which some such incident has not at some time occurred. Now in sane persons spectral illusions are exceedingly rare. In all my acquaintance I know but one man or woman who has ever experienced anything of the kind; and in this case there is nothing that resembles in the least the apparitions we are discussing. The illusive forms appear very rarely, and are connected with intense headache; they endure only for a few seconds, and are of the dullest, least interesting nature imaginable. In people not diseased or subject to paroxysms of nervous pain, proven spectral illusions are I suspect much less common than those cases of ghost-

seeing wherein coincidence of time or other conditions render the hypothesis of mere illusion exceedingly difficult to sustain."

"I cannot say," replied Sterne, "that I have ever gone into the matter deeply enough to enable me to contradict or dispute your statement, though from my conversation with medical men I should say that it is greatly exaggerated."

"I ought," rejoined Cleveland, "to have qualified it thus. Spectral illusions (proven to be such) occurring incidentally to sane persons not liable to repeated disturbance of the nerve-system from neuralgic paroxysms are as rare as I have represented them. But in nine cases out of ten the ghost-seer sees a ghost once or twice in life and no more. Therefore the theory which accounts for all such apparitions on the ground of illusion is distinctly in conflict with such facts as we do know. Observe that my friend, though liable beyond ordinary persons of sound brain to momentary deceptions of sight, has never for a moment supposed himself in his waking hours to have seen a ghost. In short, ghost-seeing and spectral illusion recognizable as such are so entirely unlike and unconnected that they very seldom if ever occur to the same persons. Out of some hundreds of ghost-stories I remember but two or three at this moment where the seer was habitually subject to apparitions; and these apparitions were not such as could be alleged with certainty to be illusive. Moreover many apparitions have been seen by two persons at once, which disposes absolutely, *pace medicorum*, of the spectral theory so far as these are concerned."

"I think," said Mrs. Dalway, "that you said just

now that the ghost-stories confirm each other. How can they do this?"

"In two ways," said Cleveland. "First, their prevalence among the most diverse nations, of different ages, religions, climate, and character, under the most various conditions, militates greatly against any attempt to explain them away as mere illusions of sense. Secondly, their essential resemblance in some particulars—most unlikely to have occurred independently to the imagination of scores of individuals severed by long ages in time and by thousands of miles in space—is very difficult to account for, unless by accepting them as genuine phenomena, independent of the seer's personalty and possessing some sort of objective reality. Such general resemblances indicate at least an extraneous existence common to all the apparitions of all ages and races, and due to a common cause working through permanent natural (not necessarily material) law. Imagination would probably have clothed the ghost in the cerements of the grave or have presented it naked, or in some garment supposed to be suitable to another world; as Christians fancy angels with wings and in long white nightgowns. But in fact apparitions so dressed are almost unknown. Wherever we learn how a ghost is supposed to be clothed, it appears with the very garments it wore in life. Wherever any exception occurs, there seems to be an obvious and distinct reason for it, on the assumption that the vision represents a reality. Thus, one of the pet objections of sceptics is really, in the universality of its truth, one of the strongest evidences in favour of the objective character of these apparitions. The ghosts

of all ages and nations again resemble one another in a quality which neither fiction nor imagination would have ascribed to them—want of power, and generally want of definite purpose. Homer described the inhabitants of Hades as his individual fancy painted them ; but that fancy must have been dominated by the ideas of his audience. Now the Homeric ghosts resemble closely the ghosts of every age down to our own in the last peculiarity which the free fancy of the inventor or the impressible but passive mind of the ghost-seer would have attributed to them ; apparent impotence. They are *νεκρῶν ἀμετρήτα κάρηνα*—as they still appear. The resemblance descends even to detail. The Homeric ghosts cannot speak till they taste blood : *i.e.*, in their native condition, unaffected by the arts of the magician, they can present themselves to the eye but cannot affect the ear. Now this is a notable feature in modern ghost-stories. Generally the apparition cannot speak ; sometimes it is driven to use strange symbols to express its meaning ; sometimes it can make its presence perceptible to many but only one can hear its voice—*i.e.*, it does *not* speak audibly, but impresses its meaning on the most receptive mind by what seem to be spoken words. These strange limits of power, common to ninety-nine ghosts out of a hundred, are the opposite of all that mere imagination would have suggested. This peculiarity is the scoff of sceptics ; yet it is just the sort of characteristic which, since it is contrary to all *à priori* expectation and yet so generally found to occur, is strong evidence in favour of some external reality.”

CHAPTER XV.

PHYSICAL PROOF AND PSYCHICAL EXPERIENCE.

“SOMETHING,” said Mrs. Dalway, “in your observations on the treatment of the corpse reminds me of a suggestion which I have more than once heard, and which more than one of the most thoughtful and impartial writers on the subject seem to consider impressive and probably true. It is said that in standing beside the dead body of a friend, we never feel that the form before us is actually the person we knew and loved. That person, that *ego*, must be then, elsewhere or nowhere; and *nowhere* an entity or that which was five minutes ago an entity hardly can be. Besides, it is argued, if the body be not our friend, he must have been something else than the body; and that something else need not—for aught we know—have been affected by death. On this hypothesis, we feel instinctively that there was something in the living form of our friend which has departed from the dead form; and that something was the man himself. If so, it would seem reasonable to conclude that the man himself was *not* his body; that rather he was a being clothed with that body. I do not put this suggestion forward as believing in it myself, but I should like to know what others think of it.”

"In the first place," said her husband, "I cannot admit the fact. When at college in London I went repeatedly into the dissecting-room of the medical branch. I saw many dead bodies there, and never felt the slightest human interest in them. Seeing them cut and carved no more disturbed me than seeing the carcass of a sheep outside a butcher's shop. Again, I have stood by the death-beds of dear friends. I have seen them, unconscious but living, a few hours before they expired. I have seen them again a few hours after death, and I certainly felt no such utter change, no such novel impression as you have described. I knew of course fully and realized clearly that my friend was dead; but I had no such instinctive perception of a change or departure of the identity as would have made me feel *instinctively* that there could be no revival. Had the dead suddenly stood erect before me the fact would have affected me with intellectual wonder but not with instinctive astonishment. I mean that I should have been surprised, not at the very first moment by the occurrence of a shock to my instincts in the conversion of the lifeless image into the living person, but only after an instant's thought, when I had recollected that one who certainly was dead had visibly returned to life."

"It seems to me," remarked Cleveland, "that your first experience rather contradicts the second. Had the corpses in the dissecting-room seemed to you identical with the living patients, you would have been at first more or less shocked and revolted by seeing the naked forms on the table and the rough treatment to which they were subjected by the students. Evidently.

you really felt that they were something so utterly distinct from the living person, whether you had known that person or not, that you did not regard them as human beings at all."

"True," said Dalway. "It happened that I had never seen them in life; but certainly I did not look at them instinctively as dead men and women, but simply, according to the phrase of medical students, as 'subjects' for experiment in anatomy. I should like, however, to ask you to put in somewhat plainer and fuller terms the meaning of your remark that all physical evidence is opposed to a belief in human immortality."

"Perhaps," said Sterne, "I, who have often discussed this question with Cleveland, can state the materialistic view of life and thought more distinctly and forcibly than he; who, though by logical necessity a sceptic, is, I strongly suspect, a sceptic against his will and in despite of his own instincts, and can hardly be called a Materialist. There is in the language of many reasoners on this subject a certain confusion, not extending to their ideas, between the immortality and the existence of the soul. Of course if the soul do not exist it cannot be immortal; but it might exist and yet perish with the body. The arguments to which Cleveland referred assail the immortality of the soul only through their bearing on its existence as a distinct entity. The theory of the Materialists is that there exists in man nothing but the physical frame, subject to two classes of force, (perhaps to two forces only) the chemical and the vital. Chemical agencies support the living frame by digesting its food, assimilating the nutritive portions, nourishing the various parts of the

body, and disposing of its waste. But, if acting alone, chemical forces would destroy the body, as they do destroy it very quickly after death. The vital forces—which may perhaps one day be resolved into a single force identical with or analogous to electricity—empower it to subsist, to move, to breathe, to perform all properly animal functions (for those of digestion and nutrition are common to vegetable life also); and, as Materialists believe, enable the brain to think and to will; to convey through the nerve fibres the commands of the Intelligence, and receive through the same fibres the report of the senses, or the impressions with which material objects affect them. According to Spiritualists (by which term I designate all believers in a soul) thought, especially in its higher operations and its supposed relations with invisible beings, is not within the capacity of matter. A thinking creature must in their opinion be possessed of something more than a body. Matter, they say, cannot think. The grey stuff and the twisted complicated nerve-fibres of the brain cannot realize and reproduce sights, events, sensual impressions; much less can they originate and record ideas and inferences independent of the senses. The material of the brain cannot, they say, conduct a conversation, construct a novel, elaborate a philosophical theory, or lay down and execute the plan of a history. Behind or within the brain and controlling it there is, they tell us, a soul which is the very self of the man; which is clothed with the body, which uses the brain as an instrument—a sort of electric battery—through which it transmits telegraphic orders by the nerves to the muscles, and receives impressions from external nature.

The Materialists admit that while sure of the fact they cannot apprehend the method; cannot understand *how* certain tissues, not differing essentially from the other tissues of the body except in diverse construction, and perhaps containing a larger amount of phosphorus, can perform the functions of thought, even as exercised by the lower animals and by savages; still less how such tissues can fulfil all those marvellous intellectual functions which distinguish the action of the most powerful human minds. No Materialist can understand how the grey matter secretes thought, how the brain-vibrations are converted into ideas, and the phosphorus of the tissues expended in the production of a history or a poem: nor yet can the Spiritualist explain by what sort of process the stimulation of the nerve-ends embedded in the skin can be so transmitted and transmuted in passing through the brain as to reach the supposed soul, and there awaken the spiritual nature to wrath or pleasure, mirth or melancholy. The conversion of material waste into spiritual life, the process by which the indubitably real action of the brain and nerves, the burning up of a small amount of matter there, can originate the subsequent action of the mind and take effect in profound thought or passionate emotion, is as inexplicable by one party as by the other. But some of the supposed relations of the soul to the body are incompatible with known facts. There exists nothing in man traceable either in its action or its essence, discoverable by the scalpel or discernible in the conduct of the living being, that is independent of or separate from the physical frame. There is no function of thought, will, emotion, that cannot be

stimulated, checked, impaired, destroyed by purely physical causes. Opium can with many persons intensify not merely the feelings but the power of the intellect, can excite the mind to feats beyond its ordinary strength, while it at the same time impairs the force of the will; and if permanently and habitually employed, permanently affects in many instances even the moral sense itself. The whole character, intellectual and moral, may be changed, perverted, stupefied by a blow on the head—has actually been changed by such a blow, sending a small splinter of bone into the brain—and has, after years of perversion, been changed once more by the trephine.* It is impossible to mention a faculty of the supposed soul that is not demonstrably just as much under the control of adequate physical influences as are the skin, the liver, and the stomach. It seems impossible to believe in a soul so completely independent of the body that it can survive the dissolution of its material dwelling, and yet so absolutely identified with the body that a material agent capable of acting on and through the bodily tissues can control, modify, temporarily silence or even utterly extinguish the soul's every power and property. Spiritualists reply that it is not the soul that is affected, but only its power of manifesting itself

* The case to which Sterne here alluded has a double aspect. The victim seemed to suffer much from his own perverted nature and affections, and was susceptible to one personal influence for good during his moral alienation. And, as the operation seems to have restored his moral character as it was before the injury, it might be argued that that character really subsisted throughout, underlying the manifestations of the injured brain. But were not the peculiarities of this case due to the fact that the brain-injury was merely local? And if the trephine had not been employed?

through the brain. This answer might hold good if physical agencies could only stupefy the man, hinder his thought, or prevent him from giving effect to that thought in speech, writing, or action. But in reality they can do very much more. They can actually so affect every single power or faculty assigned by Spiritualists to the soul apart from the body as to pervert and turn out of their natural direction all its functions, from the lowest to the highest; can even turn a good nature into a bad one. It would not be easy for any one acquainted with idiots and imbeciles to believe that behind and within the deficient deformed or paralysed brain there was a conscious self aware of its own being, thinking soundly and wishing to act wisely, but unable to give effect to its will through an impaired physical machinery. No one, I say, who had seen much of either idiocy or dementia (I do not mean insanity) in their actual operation could believe this. The idiot or imbecile has evidently no thought or will struggling against the stupidity and weakness manifest to others in his outward action. This fact alone would suffice to make the separate existence of a soul within the body most improbable. But when you find that this soul itself—that is to say, every function or power which Spiritualists ascribe to it—can be not merely suppressed but misdirected by agencies acting on and through the body, the idea of such an inward spiritual self, whereof the physical frame is a mere garment, becomes utterly absurd and is directly contradicted by the facts. Thus then it is perfectly correct to say that all physical evidence leads us not merely to ignore the supposed soul, not merely to deny that any proof of its

reality or probability can be assigned, but positively and peremptorily to disbelieve in its existence, and to affirm that the mind with all its faculties—nay, the very self, the conscious *ego*—is but the operation or function of the brain, the effect of the brain machinery in action under the stimulus probably of some force akin to electricity, whether generated in the cells of the brain or otherwise. With the cessation of this action, the decline and gradual extinction of the motive power that produces it, the mind ceases; the vital forces die out, all the animal functions come to an end, consciousness is extinguished, that change which we call death takes place, and—the chemical forces regaining absolute supremacy—the body is slowly resolved into its original elements. Thus the physical evidences disprove immortality by disproving the existence of that which is supposed to survive the death of the body.”

“I do not know,” said Cleveland, “that your argument, strong as it is, can fairly be said to *disprove* the existence of a soul apart from the body. It certainly renders that separate existence very improbable. The truth is that the spiritualistic and materialistic arguments scarcely meet each other, except at the one point you have noted; the question whether matter be capable of thought. Here certainly the Spiritualists would *prima facie* seem to have the best of it. But if matter be not capable of thought, then since the higher animals certainly think they must, it would seem, possess some sort of soul. I have only heard one answer to this objection, and it is worth consideration. Some disciples of Swedenborg affirm that the whole physical

universe is pervaded and in a sense sustained by spiritual forces; in fact that spirit is the reality (the 'substance' or *noumenon* of the school-men) while matter is merely the clothing or phenomenon. Now it has been suggested that the essential distinction between man and the animal world, and again between higher and lower animals, is the degree of individuality they severally possess. It is conceivable that the animals, from the highest and most thoroughly educated of dogs or elephants down to the limpet, may be animated by a portion of the spirit-life pervading the material universe, which enables them to think such thought as is necessary for their several functions and spheres of action, but is not individualized sufficiently to prevent its return after their death to the general store of spiritual force. Man, on the other hand, receives from the same store at birth, or probably long before birth, a certain portion of spiritual life or force; but his far greater individuality—the conscious personality that pervades his existence, action, thought, his sense of moral responsibility—so individualize this portion of spirit as to constitute it permanently into a distinct spiritual personality, a several soul, a separate *ego* incapable of reabsorption into the general store of spirit force. Imperfectly acquainted as I am with the views of this class of thinkers, I no doubt have imperfectly represented them. But I am bound to say that this theory, or something like it, seems to me the only hypothesis by which it is possible to reconcile belief in a soul whereof this body is the mere garment with known physical phenomena and with the facts of natural life—especially with that graduation of intelligent

being, from a Shakspeare down to a Bushman or Digger Indian, and again from the Digger Indian to his dog, and from the dog to the entozoon or tapeworm, which makes it all but impossible to draw at any point a line of demarcation between the soul-gifted and the soulless."

"I might grant," rejoined Sterne—"if I cared to distinguish between the different degrees of unsoundness and absurdity in a hypothesis which seems to me essentially baseless—that of all spiritualistic theories that which you have just described is the least untenable. But I can see no reason why sensible and practical men should trouble themselves to entertain the question of spiritual existence at all, seeing how directly in its every form it conflicts with the known facts of physiology and with the irresistible evidence going to prove that physical agencies control absolutely life moral and intellectual."

"I have," said Cleveland, "given you one reason—though I grant it has little weight with the great majority even of firm believers in a soul and a future life—which compels me to regard the question as having two sides; I mean the all but universal belief not merely in a soul and a future but in the reappearance of the dead, and the strong testimony to such reappearance which age after age has furnished. There is, however, another argument which has some weight with me, and which has still greater weight with others, generally in proportion to their moral excellence and religious earnestness. I feel, and those to whom I refer feel yet more strongly, an irresistible conviction that there is a God, and a God who listens to us when we pray: a

God who guides the fate of each individual as directly and clearly as the fate of nations or the course of stars and planets. I believe that the existence of a Creative Intelligence might be logically demonstrated, when once it is conceded that the world has not existed eternally in its present form. I believe that even the Darwinian scheme of development can only be reconciled to facts by importing into it an intelligent direction, causing variation to take a particular course, and preventing that extinction of incipient varieties through the force of intercrossing which, were the matter left to chance, would certainly occur. We can argue this point at another time if you wish it. For the present I only ask you to understand that I, and many more at least as free from prejudice and bigotry as myself,—among them one or two friends of mine who have been Atheists—do firmly believe not merely in a Creator but in a Providence; not merely in a general but in a special Providence. A careful study of history impresses me and many others with an equally strong conviction that the course of human progress is directed by an Intelligence infinitely superior to that of any man or of all mankind, which uses races and individuals as its instruments. Going further, coming down to our own individual experiences, we believe that in our own lives we trace distinct Providential government. The longer we live, the more closely we examine our own motives and acts and the consequences they entail, the more clearly do we discern an overruling power guiding most of our loyally-meant unselfish actions—even when they seem to involve great and permanent sacrifices—to ends whereof we had not dreamt, and making every cowardly vicious

selfish action the cause of ultimate punishment. We feel that our lives are in very truth from the cradle to extreme old age an educational process. What use in this education, if where it ends we end also? We are kept in school till nightfall, and our lessons are never completed till we pass out into the utter darkness. We have no opportunity here of putting to use a tithe of the experience bought with so much suffering: can see no possible earthly result adequate to the misery we have undergone while grappling with tasks too heavy for our strength. Our best qualities, our worthiest actions, have directly contributed to our anguish; we have been wretched just in proportion as strong affections, generous impulses, and ill-requited loyalty have left us defenceless with quivering nerves and shattered spirits at the mercy of those we have trusted too fully, forgiven too easily or loved too deeply and too long. Nature, we are told, is cruel. I doubt it. I incline to hope that on the whole every life save that of Man is happy while it lasts, and that death is generally as painless as it well can be. How then if Man's life be, like that of the lower animals, confined to some few years upon this earth, can we account for the misery that so often attends it, for the moral and physical suffering that infests it, for the horror of death as annihilation that overhangs it as a cloud of gloom and fear, never long absent from our thoughts and dulling our brightest as it throws a darker shade over our saddest hours? If man be not immortal, the Creator—whom many of us regard not merely as Ruler but as Father—has dealt most hardly with His finest and most sensitive creatures. He inflicts on them a severe, a strict, a painful

discipline which, if life ends for ever at seventy or eighty, is in truth thrown away. A friend whose life has been far less happy than my own—whose existence has been from childhood tormented by almost incessant ill-health and overshadowed by constantly darkening clouds of sorrow and anxiety—said to me the other day, ‘I do think that I ought to have leave to go back again over my life with the experience I have gained in it. Otherwise, though I acknowledge fully the justice of every punishment I have received, though I admit that I have not suffered more than I deserve, I cannot understand the dealing of Providence with myself or with others. I do not punish my children for any fault, however grave, merely because they have done wrong. I would not punish at all were it not necessary to cure by punishment faults which if uncured would bring down heavier penalties later in life. How can I suppose that my Father in Heaven deals less kindly and tenderly with His children than we short-sighted, impatient, irritable mortals with ours?’ The argument for immortality is moral and religious; the argument against it is physical and practical; and it is exceedingly difficult to bring the two into relation so far as to balance the one against the other. They are in fact essentially incommensurable; and hence the perplexity, the sadness, the doubt of all who have sufficient trust in science to appreciate the one class of reasonings and sufficient faith in the truth of human instincts and the consistency that pervades the order of the universe to apprehend the other.”

“Since,” replied Sterne, “I do not believe in a Creative Intelligence, and still less in an overruling Providence—least of all in that special Providence, as it is called, of which you seem so fully assured—I find no difficulty in the matter. But even from your own standpoint I do not think your argument has the weight you would give to it. The existence of evil, if it do not conflict altogether with the idea of a Divine Fatherhood, at least proves that if there be a Creator and Ruler of the Universe He worked and works under conditions. If He be not a *roi fainéant*, He is certainly not an absolute autocrat. He may be infinite, but assuredly He is not unconditioned. He allows throughout nature much more suffering and evil than you are willing to admit. You say that the lives of animals are happy. I say that they live in constant terror; as is proved by their incessant vigilance, by their eager listening for sounds that indicate peril, by the care with which social animals plant sentries to guard the flock when feeding or resting. Grant that the suffering is as little as was possible, consistently with that law of progress through the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, which you recognize almost as fully as I do; still the Creator of your conception was evidently compelled by some force He could not resist to allow of great evil and terrible suffering. Nay more, He is compelled in human existence to permit not merely suffering but sin. In human history as in animal life He develops a few magnificent specimens, a few splendid races, at the expense of lavish destruction and incalculable misery, and through ages of darkness and slaughter,

Why suppose that mortality cannot be among the essential conditions of His work? How can you tell that He *could* have made men other than they are, even if they be utterly and absolutely mortal, even if their existence be necessarily limited to some seventy or eighty years?"

"What," said Mrs. Dalway, "could possibly impose such a condition upon Him?"

"Well," replied Sterne, "I have not cared to study a problem in whose essential and primary assumption I disbelieve. But it is at least conceivable that the supposed Creator of this world and of the visible Universe might not be the Supreme Being, but a subject of some higher Powers of whose character we know nothing: not even the little Cleveland supposes himself to gather from external nature, and from his own moral experience, respecting the immediate Author of both. The Demiurgus may have been forbidden by these higher Powers to create immortal intelligent creatures; lest, being immortal, being improvable, and having therefore the capacity, the time, and perhaps the strong and permanent desire for indefinite progress and elevation, they should become too wise and too powerful; lest they should in one word approach dangerously near to the nature and powers of Deity itself."

"Of course," said Cleveland, "anything is conceivable when we are attempting to reason respecting Beings of whom we can know little more, perhaps even less, than a flea knows of a man, and respecting conditions to us necessarily insoluble and incomprehensible. But if there be one solution of the insoluble

which seems to me more utterly preposterous, more certainly false than any other, it is that you have just propounded. The distance, moral and intellectual, between the Creator and Ruler of this world and His highest creature, the interval between the noblest of men and God, is such that the distance between the sea-weed and man is absolutely lost in comparison therewith; as the diameter of the earth's orbit, seen from the distance of Sirius, dwindles to a mathematical point and becomes utterly imperceptible. Darwin supposes that in infinite ages Man has by natural laws been developed out of something lower than a sea-weed. This is perhaps possible, may conceivably be true; but that in any infinity of ages man should approach even as near to Deity as the sea-weed is to Man I hold to be simply, absolutely, ludicrously impossible. The supposed Supreme Rulers who could entertain the remotest fear of such an approach and consequently impose precautionary measures upon the Demiurgus, must be so utterly silly that their mere want of sense would deprive them of the supposed supreme power with which your hypothesis endows them."

"The humility," rejoined Sterne, "which you express and doubtless feel on your own behalf and that of humanity in general, may be becoming and wholesome, but it is scarcely logical. The capacity of indefinite unlimited moral and intellectual progress in a being endowed with immortality, necessarily and logically involves the power of reaching any conceivable point of perfection—even that of Deity itself."

“You are,” replied Cleveland, “a much better mathematician than I; yet I should have thought that even mathematical knowledge so limited as mine would have suggested the fallacy that taints and invalidates your argument. No reasonings drawn from the finite hold good when applied to the infinite. An infinite series of infinitesimal steps may have a finite limit—the integral calculus may be called, surely, ‘the science of the finite limits of infinite series of infinitesimals.’ Now as compared with the distance between creature and Creator every step of human progress is infinitesimal; and you might multiply these infinitesimals by infinity without necessarily bringing the result beyond a point distinctly finite. Of course we cannot in the absence of data say what the result would be; but we may still be very sure that it would leave us practically as far short of Divine power and perfection as at present. I should like, before we close this discussion, to mention one other argument in favour of immortality which has great weight with those who accept its basis. Most religious men and women believe in the reality of at least occasional personal communion with the Divine—whether with the Saviour or the Father. To any one so believing it seems impossible that such communion should be interrupted for ever by death. If man became attached to an animal, he would fain exempt that animal from death. It would be difficult even for man to love an ephemerid. It is therefore impossible to those who feel the reality of their own communion with God to believe in their own mortality. They cannot suppose that He enters into

any personal relations, however distant, with a merely ephemeral being."

"I admit to the full," returned Sterne, "the sincerity of the belief to which you refer, and if I could admit its truth I could hardly challenge the inference you draw from it. I have met some persons unquestionably conscious of communion with a *non-ego* always within reach, and of whose presence they were always more or less conscious; conscious sometimes clearly, sometimes dimly. I should be greatly puzzled to account for such a conscious experience in so many differing natures on the basis of sheer illusion. But I have observed closely the phenomena of my own consciousness and I have questioned closely friends more exceptionally constituted than myself. I have through such study and questions learned to apprehend that, in many individuals of exceptional nervous constitution, that duality of the brain which exists in us all is so strongly marked that it seems almost to amount to a dual or double personality. One moiety of the brain in these cases appears to be exclusively concerned in the ordinary functions of life, thought, and action. In a word, this half alone—generally the left half, which commands the right limbs—is the seat of the active self, the conscious personality. Yet there remains ever present, though not generally active, the other distinct moiety or secondary brain—perhaps by its very inactivity calmer, colder, more judicial—which every now and then interferes to check criticise and control that operative moiety of the brain which does the daily work of life and with which the individual identifies his conscious self. This second brain then seems to

him when suddenly so intervening a distinct individual, a *non-ego*. Such a constitution was, on my hypothesis, that of Socrates; and his 'Dæmon' was in that case only the less active and therefore calmer half of his powerful brain. This constitution I suspect to be that of all religious mystics, and more or less of all those who believe themselves to hold communion of any kind with invisible spiritual persons, Divine or otherwise. I conjecture, then, that the Dæmon—the Providence, the prayer-answering God, the external conscience, the invisible protector, the guardian angel, call it what you will, of which exceptional natures in every age have been conscious—is, not indeed exactly an illusion, but the creation of a double consciousness not recognised as such; is in fact the second half of a brain whose first half alone is under ordinary circumstances consciously active."

"That is possible," said Cleveland. "The one argument against such an explanation which strikes me at first sight is the utter distinctness and diversity of character between the two halves of the same brain—nourished in and through the same body and controlled from the first to the last moment of existence by the same physical influences—which your theory requires. It seems to me that while the two halves may differ in power, in activity, and to some extent in quality—so that the less active may be nevertheless the stronger calmer and wiser—they must of necessity resemble one another so closely that the second could never be mistaken by the first for a separate and entirely unlike individuality. The person with whom religious people especially believe themselves to be in communion is not

a second self, but something infinitely better and wiser than themselves.”

“I do not pretend,” replied Sterne, “to give a complete or coherent account of what is at best a probable hypothesis based on a doctrine as yet so ill-defined, so imperfectly mastered, so beset on all sides with unsolved problems and uncertain limitations, as Wigan’s theory of the duality of the brain. If it be accepted by the best authorities, they seem to interpret and define it very variously; and I have no intention of committing myself on ground so dubious. I meant to suggest one among the possible explanations of a peculiar ‘phenomenon of consciousness’ in order to dispel the mystical inferences of those who experience it by showing that it allowed of a purely natural interpretation; not to insist that my suggestion was correct. But I think it at least likely that—in the very exceptional cases of which alone I speak—the two halves of the brain are in fact representative of two distinct personalities; severally generated by the several parents. If it be true that the less active brain is the wiser and better, the distinction of personal character between what I may call the conscious and the non-conscious self may perhaps be explained by supposing that the active excitable brain comes from one parent, the slower and calmer brain from the other; and hence possibly an original distinction of character so marked as to conceal whatever of identity or close resemblance the similar conditions inseparable from relation with and nourishment by the same body may cause or enforce.”

At this point we were rejoined by Mrs. Cleveland and Gerard, who were accompanied by Vere. When

the ladies left us to prepare for the early dinner which, out of consideration to the servants, was the Sunday custom of Cleveland's house, our host observed to the clergyman :

“We have been discussing this morning a topic certainly appropriate to the day ; the question of human immortality in some of its scientific and again in some of its moral or metaphysical aspects. Fortunately for ourselves—since none of us are qualified at once by knowledge and by conviction to take the affirmative side in such a controversy—we have not dwelt, I may say we have not touched, on the Scriptural relations of the question. You always have the unfair advantage of the pulpit, which exempts you from reply. But even on those very unequal conditions I should like to hear you, and still more that our friends should hear you, explain those views regarding the Resurrection of which I have, after years of intimate acquaintance with you, but a vague conception.”

“I am conscious,” said Vere, “that the privilege of the pulpit is provoking to thoughtful laymen ; who could often enlighten the clergymen much more—at least on some of the problems whether of practical life or of so-called philosophy involved in his argument—than he can enlighten them. I grant to the full all that has been said, whether by infidel satirists or by gentler humorists, on the pretentious absurdity of too many controversial discourses addressed by young and imperfectly informed clergymen to a congregation containing perhaps a dozen or more hearers well qualified both by age, reading, and thought, either to bewilder or instruct a whole class of such preachers. Even as

regards the simpler questions of morals and religion—the temptations, difficulties and perplexities of practical life, and those plain duties which we are apt rather to neglect than to misconceive—I cannot but acknowledge the reasonableness of Mr. Trollope's criticism, when he expresses his wonder at the audacity of young men fresh from College in venturing to speak in a tone of authoritative advice to those who, however little education they may have derived from books, are by the mere experience of life often far wiser on such points than their official instructor. When myself a very young preacher I was always disposed to confine myself in the pulpit as much as possible to the precepts of the Gospel, and to illustrate or enforce them chiefly by historical example and by facts familiar alike to young and old; or else to deliver merely educational lectures, explaining and bringing home to my hearers the meaning of texts, laws, and narratives likely to be misunderstood by men and women whose experience and information were confined to English life. I always find that I learn in the course of a year from my elder parishioners quite as much as I can teach from the pulpit. But to return to that peculiarity of pulpit oratory on which you dwelt—the absence of reply—I think it a greater injury and misfortune to the clergyman than to the congregation. It is, I fear, a necessary evil. I hardly see how we could allow members of the congregation to reply to the sermon, unless indeed the sermon were separated as completely as are my afternoon lectures from the Service; and even then the discussion would be apt to degenerate into a squabble, and impair the usefulness and influence of the clergyman

outside the church. But every man not very thoughtless or very conceited must be conscious how great is the disadvantage to which the soundness of his own mental tone and the efficacy of his arguments are exposed by that exemption from rejoinder which you—repeating for the moment the common-place of the satirist—treat as an unfair advantage. Unfortunately, not only are we not liable to immediate and public rejoinder, but we seldom hear our sermons criticized; least of all by our intellectual equals. If we hear any criticism at all, it is mostly from ignorant men or women possessed with the conceit of fancied knowledge, and is the criticism of theological prejudice or personal jealousy rather than of cool intellectual examination or practical experience. Consequently even the most careful and conscientious among us are tempted into slovenliness of thought and reasoning if not of expression. We are, moreover, despite all the care possible to fallible mortals, liable to exaggerate the force and convincing effect of our own favourite arguments, since we neither see them answered in print as you literary and political controversialists do, nor generally hear them canvassed in conversation. It seems now-a-days to be made a point of social courtesy not to discuss theological or religious questions, at least not to discuss them with freedom and frankness, in presence of the parson. I have often wished that it were possible to visit my parishioners in disguise, so that they might speak of me without knowing that they were speaking to me, and might, therefore, converse or argue with me simply as a man and scholar, not as clergyman.”

“I should be sorry,” said Cleveland, “if you supposed the common-place I just now uttered to have any personal reference to you. Of all the speakers I have ever heard you are the least provocative, and of all clergymen certainly the most candid and the least disposed consciously to take advantage of a position of authority. Nevertheless I confess that I never hear, even from you, a sermon on any question that interests me, however closely I may agree with you, without wishing to canvass particular points before you had time to pass on to others. I should like, for example, to challenge now and then your fundamental premises, or to insert a qualification, before you proceed to draw your inferences from them. At the same time I repeat that I should very much like to hear you discuss the question of immortality from the Scriptural standpoint, and especially the evidences and probable facts of the Resurrection as you see them, in presence of the friends with whom I have this morning discussed some of the extra-scriptural bearings of the former question.”

“Well then,” said Vere, “if you can make it convenient to attend my lecture this afternoon, I will read a discourse on that very subject which I have been preparing for some time past. It is not by any means complete or satisfactory to myself, and there are in it so many points upon which I feel somewhat doubtful—on which further enquiry might possibly modify my reasoning—that I had meant to keep it back probably for at least another year. I will only ask you to bear this acknowledgment of incompleteness in mind. For the generality of my hearers—since its defects

relate to points that would scarcely interest or affect them—it will probably be as wholesome in its present state as it would be could I reserve it till time and thought had matured it sufficiently to render it worthy of being submitted to the critical consideration of men like yourselves.”

At this moment we were summoned to dinner; and at dinner it was unanimously agreed that we should attend the parish Church at half-past three that afternoon. Mrs. Cleveland, who had already walked there and back, was to drive down with Mrs. Dalway. The men agreed to walk. Vere left us immediately after dinner, as he had duties to perform previous to the delivery of what he called a lecture, but what his parishioners were wont to describe as his afternoon sermon.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERE'S SERMON—THE FIRST EASTER.

DURING our walk to the church Sterne remarked, "Men's character is so complicated, their conduct is often governed by such various, intricate and inexplicable motives, that I seldom feel surprised or puzzled by finding any man, however highminded or however wise, in a position the most inconsistent illogical or incongruous. At any rate, I seldom trouble myself even to ponder how the fly got into the amber. But of all brilliant flies imbedded in the most worthless lumps of clouded amber, no human insect ever seemed to me so utterly out of place as Vere. He was so successful at college that he could hardly have taken to the Church in despair or doubt of earning a living, or much more than a living, in one of the lucrative professions. His sermons are often thoughtful, seldom wanting in lucidity of expression, and frequently contain real novelty of view upon matters of general interest; and, with some change in their form, many of them would be well paid for as Magazine articles. Even if, like many other very able men, he could not write that most remunerative and most worthless kind of so-called literature, the leading

articles of daily newspapers, he could certainly with less work than he gives to his sermons alone make a good income by his pen. I know however, having lived some few years in this parish, that his sermons, carefully as they are prepared, constitute a very small fraction of his work. They give me, moreover, the impression that he is not merely honourable in the ordinary sense,—far too honourable to imitate Colenso and other Broad-Churchmen and engage formally to defend a Creed he disbelieves, or but partially believes; or on the other hand to take pay for defending it and really assail it,—but, I should think, honest in the highest and most exceptional degree; honest in argument and loyal to truth even when revolving the most deeply interesting problems in the privacy of his own mind. I know how difficult it is not to let our wishes and sympathies bias our judgment when considering questions whose solution must affect our inner selves, our peace of heart and mind, as long as we live. It is easy to resist such a bias when it takes the gross form of worldly interest; then the difficulty of high-minded men is to avoid being biassed against their interest; but under the subtler influence of love and hope, of early education, of felt spiritual needs, the intellect is very apt to hold the balance awry. I know not a few Secularists who are obviously though unconsciously incapacitated for impartial study of these logical questions by bitter recollections of an Evangelical training; and one or two whose personal experience of Christian professions has inspired a rooted hatred and contempt for Christianity. Extreme reluctance to forego the consolations of a firm faith in

Providence and an assured hope beyond the grave must close innumerable minds against all arguments not absolutely decisive that would shake the basis of either. If there be a man capable of forgetting all in a single-minded anxiety to see and speak the truth, I should take Vere to be such a man. I cannot comprehend why such a man should have entered the Church, or having entered it—perhaps because he had not at four-and-twenty thoroughly considered the fundamental principles of its creed—how he can care to remain there. Pecuniarily, as I said, he must know that he is a loser; and yet I cannot understand his entering and remaining in the Church from sincere belief in its doctrine and conviction that he could do more good in that way than in any other. Such acts of self-devotion are infrequent; but still not by any means unheard of or inexplicable on the part of very young men; though clever men as a rule either rise in the Church or leave it. But why Vere should have continued all these years to profess doctrines which no man of such clear and logical intelligence—so versed as he is not merely in technical theology but in the fundamental controversies of the day—can really accept save in a non-natural sense, while he loses heavily in income and repute by adhering to them, is to me incomprehensible."

"Infidels," replied Cleveland—"to use a discourteous but brief and well-understood party term—are generally the most extravagant and stubborn of bigots. No Inquisitor was ever more deeply and arrogantly convinced, not only that his own views were true but that no man could honestly doubt their truth, than are the great

majority of sceptical critics and scientific Materialists. Mr. Holyoake is almost the only exception I ever knew, even among the more experienced, candid and thoughtful unbelievers. I well remember the surprise with which I heard a clerical convert to Pyrrhonism coolly declare that no clergyman of ordinary intelligence could be sincere. I was then young enough to meet such an imputation by what after all was its logical answer—the *argumentum ad hominem*, and to think it strange when that home-thrust was answered by a burst of anger. I knew the infidel character somewhat better, but had sufficient faith in the liberalizing tendencies of culture and intellectual society to be equally startled, when one of the ablest aspirants of my own age—perhaps the most scholarly of Oxford Radicals and since a leader in his profession—denounce a rising statesman, now among the foremost and most respected of public men, as insincere ‘because he is far too clever and well-informed to be the devout Churchman and thorough Tory he affects to seem.’ My Oxonian friend has learned truer and more tolerant wisdom from the experience of practical life; but nearly all those sceptics who have taken part in theological or scientific controversy remain at fifty as unreasonable, as unjust, as confidently persuaded of their own infallibility and the insincerity of their opponents as they were at five-and-twenty. You share—pardon me for saying so—the stubborn party zeal of Inquisitors and the intolerant egotism of dissenting preachers: together with an incapacity to learn or unlearn worthy of French Legitimists or Red Republicans. Vere thoroughly believes in the creed of the Church as he loyally interprets it.

To him the next world is at least as real as the present ; and his Heaven and Hell are not indeed those of Calvinism, but those of Scripture as Scriptural phraseology should be read in the light of Oriental metaphor. He believes that through the agency of earnest and devout clergymen a few souls in each parish which if left to themselves would, so far as human judgment can see, go hopelessly astray, may be directed on the road to Heaven. He, like very few other men, practically accepts the logical consequences of this belief, and unselfishly acts up to it. He thinks it well worth the sacrifice of any possible renown, the devotion of a lifetime, the abnegation of every earthly advantage, of every personal enjoyment, to save for eternity the happiness of one or two of those fellow-Christians for whose sake the Master whom he regards as Divine died upon the cross. Such consistency is very rare ; but it is infinitely more logical and reasonable than the conduct of ordinary Christians or even of ordinary Materialists. And the more profoundly thoughtful and more clear-sighted the man is, the more natural is it that he should be true to his own convictions, and square his conduct to his Creed.”

“But,” said Sterne, “how *can* he believe his creed ? Take the one point to which you have just alluded : the doctrine of the Atonement. That doctrine is not merely illogical and therefore (as I should have supposed) incredible to a man of Vere’s intellect, but blasphemous and revolting, and therefore (as I should have supposed) intolerable to a man of the loving nature and profound religious devotion you ascribe to him, and probably—from my distant experience of his

character—ascrbe to him with perfect truth. Put into plain words—as surely he would put it in the privacy of his own mind—it is the most horrible and offensive nonsense ever promulgated by a religious leader, or even by a professional theologian; though professional theologians in pressing their conclusions display a calmer contentment with utter and absolute nonsense and a sterner indifference to glaring immorality than any other class of rational beings. The doctrine of the Atonement is briefly this. The Father, with absolute power and absolute foreknowledge, created man, knowing and intending that man should fall into sin, knowing and intending that sin should condemn endless generations perfectly innocent of that original fault,—nay babies and children innocent of all fault,—to eternal and unspeakable torment. The Son, being from eternity in relation with the Father more intimate than we can conceive, allowed and acquiesced in it if He were not the agent of this monstrous cruelty; yet at a later period deliberately chose to take upon Himself the responsibility and punishment of human sin in order to save—not all mankind but—a select few. He left to the merciless iniquity of the Creator all the countless generations between Adam and Augustus. He left to the same cruelty all who should not hear of His sacrifice, or should not be able to apprehend its meaning and value. Yet “He so loved” the few that He was willing to die in torment for them. The Father, who had no scruple in condemning thousands of millions to eternal and unutterable torture for faults they could not avoid, yet scrupled to spare even a few unless the metaphorical “demands” of some impersonal personi-

fied Justice could be satisfied by the death of His Son in place of those who were to be exempted from the general doom of their species. It is intelligible that men so saved should regard their Saviour with profound affection and personal gratitude, illogical as was His conduct and arbitrary as were the conditions by which its benefit was limited to them. But they, and all others who at any period of their eternal future may learn the story, in proportion as they appreciate and are thankful for the sacrifice of the Son, must regard the Father with horror and hatred. If they worship Him, it must be as savages worship the Devil, in order to dissuade Him from hurting them. Indeed, such a Deity is not morally distinguishable from the Devil of tradition, unless by His far greater wickedness; seeing that the Devil only endeavours to ruin those for whose existence he is nowise responsible."

Dalway, though by no means an orthodox devotee or a scrupulous formalist, stood aghast at the plainness of this statement. Cleveland listened to it with perfect coolness: and presently answered with the calm indifference of a philosopher debating some abstract question respecting the *summum bonum* or the primary basis of morals.

"As a profound believer in the perfect goodness and wisdom of the Creator," he replied, "I regard the vulgar (or orthodox) doctrine of the Atonement very much as you do; though with a passionate abhorrence that you cannot share. To you it is simply a revolting fancy, fictitious in all its parts. To me, it is a libel on the Being whom I regard with unspeakable reverence and gratitude; imputing to Him atrocities at which Attila

or Tiberius would stand aghast. But of course such is not the view of the Atonement entertained by thoughtful men—I might say by any man outside of some narrow bigoted and utterly selfish Calvinistic sects. That hideous blasphemy nowhere coincides with the faith held by Churchmen like Vere on one hand, or by independent intelligent believers—*e.g.*, Unitarians and Swedenborgians—on the other. Nay, it does not represent the idea of those who developed the original theory. Of course those ancient theologians very imperfectly understood their own thought, and never fairly or clearly worked out their meaning. Had they done so, even they must have seen in it not a few signal and fatal inconsistencies. But that original idea was apparently—to put it in language as plain as your own—something like this. The Son, and not the Father, was the Creator of this world and of the human species. Most probably, when proposing to create a race of responsible moral immortal beings, with whom He might feel sympathy and in whom He could take personal interest, He consulted His Father. He was doubtless told that He would make a mess of the work—that the conditions hardly allowed of success. He tried nevertheless, and failed. He found that His attempt promised to result in the misery on earth of His favourite creatures, and in their eternal suffering after death. Naturally and righteously dismayed at this prospect, He again appealed to the unimpassioned immovable Fate-like wisdom of the Father. The latter must be supposed to have answered something to the following purport. ‘The Eternal Laws of the Cosmos do not permit that sin should go unpunished, or that a race like that you have

created should be held irresponsible. A terrible fault has been committed; a terrible atonement must be made for it. If mankind be left to themselves, the inviolable principles which govern the moral as well as the physical Order, linking cause and consequence in a chain incapable of severance or rupture, ensure that creatures essentially and immortally sinful shall procreate children similarly constituted from generation to generation, and that all shall be eternally and utterly miserable. Sinfulness involves misery as its inevitable and inseparable consequence. You and you alone, as the original author of the mischief on the one hand, and as a Deity with infinite capacity of suffering on the other, can if you will make that payment for the sinfulness of your creatures and the failure of your own work which is due to destiny and to abstract justice. You may save the children of your Adam, but only by becoming one of them, while retaining the infinite nature of Deity with its infinite capacity of pain—of which indeed you cannot divest yourself. You must bear in your own person the penalty due to all your human dependants. You must endure that death which is their inevitable lot; and having done so, you will have made payment in full, and may retrieve the error you have committed, with all its terrible consequences to these creatures of yours in whom you seem so deeply interested.’ The Son accepted the conditions and paid the forfeit, and from that moment enjoyed the right to repair the consequences of the original mistake, and to save all who chose to be saved through the means thus rendered available.”

“But,” said Sterne, “you cannot mean to attribute

such an extraordinary theory to the educated Churchmen of the present day; and least of all to a man like Vere, incapable at once of the inconsistency and the impiety involved in such a notion?"

"Of course not," answered Cleveland. "The idea I have roughly sketched out was set forth by a well-known heresiarch of the day, in a conversation I had with him not long since. Of course it was not his belief; but he was inclined to regard it as approximating in all likelihood very closely to the original. Of course it can only have been very imperfectly and vaguely presented in its entirety, even to the minds that first gave it form and coherence by combining what they saw of actual human conditions with what seemed to them the necessary justice of a Deity and the logic of destiny. I will not attempt to sketch, however roughly, the various interpretations of the Atonement entertained by Christian thinkers at the present day. I will only mention one view held, I believe, by some disciples of Swedenborg, and perhaps by Swedenborg himself, which, however, is an explanation rather of the Incarnation than of the Sacrifice. They say that in the time of Augustus, as in that of the Flood, the wickedness of mankind had become so great and general that the influx into earthly life of that spiritual emanation from the inner world by which material existence is sustained, and on which human life is especially dependent, had been dangerously diminished and was likely to be cut off. To restore the free circulation of this essential inner life, the free communication of spiritual influences to the world, and especially to human nature, the Lord—

for they know no God but Jesus Christ—consented or chose to come down to earth in person; and, by becoming Himself a member of the human race, to bring its members, wherever existing, once more into relations with the spiritual Cosmos. Remember that the word atonement properly means reconciliation. In this etymological meaning of the phrase you have the key to the least exceptionable and incredible among the various interpretations placed upon the doctrine by most if not all of its more intelligent and reasonable adherents. They consider that Christ lived and died as man, not to pay a penalty imposed on mankind by some abstract Power behind the Throne of God Himself—nor yet to reconcile the Deity to His creatures, from whom He could not be estranged by the weaknesses and sins of a nature He perfectly understood—but rather to reconcile the creature to his Creator. Experience had shown how difficult it was for man to apprehend in any useful sense the idea of personal relations to a Creator unknown, invisible, intelligible only through a Creation full of perplexities and apparent contradictions. Philosophers might appreciate with awe the evidences of infinite Wisdom and Power; enthusiasts might catch rare and partial glimpses of His reflection in the conscience; but for the ordinary man—for mankind present or future—the abstract truth was unavailing. He who said ‘Be Light, and Light was’ was lost to the sight of hard-worked hardly-used men, of simple, sad, humble women, in the intolerable splendour of the glory that surrounded the Throne. Even the countrymen of David and Isaiah had made of Jehovah a Deity less divine, less

just, less attractive than Elohim: the God of Jacob was no longer the God of Japhet, hardly even the God of Abraham. The Incarnation offered to the weakness of humanity an Image of the Divine in its most human aspect: a Son through whose brotherhood with men the Fatherhood of God could be brought home to our hearts, as His Kingship to our intellect. And for this view of Christ's person and purpose this much at least may be said; that it is from Him and through Him—it is only since He lived and died—that those who confess and those who deny Him have learnt the idea which brings earth within sight and hearing of Paradise—the only conception of God which can raise, strengthen, or comfort Man—the name of Our Father which is in Heaven. The Atonement, according to its latest and most rational interpreters, may have been needed to render relations between the Divine and human once more possible: the Incarnation offered to human worship an Image of the Deity so humanized that it appealed most forcibly to those whose human affections and imagination were least able to apprehend and put faith in the comparative abstraction of Creative Wisdom—the Infinite, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Invisible.”

By this time we had reached the church. The congregation was a small one, consisting in exceptionally large proportion of men. Of the few gentlemen of education and intelligence whom the beauty of the local scenery had induced to settle in the place, nearly all were present; and with them perhaps a score of the yeomanry, or as they are there called ‘statesmen,’ farming their own hereditary lands; a class

extinct elsewhere, but still to be found in considerable number among the Cumbrian hills. They give to the character and social relations of that country a peculiar tone—an independence of bearing perfectly divested of insolence or self-assertion among the middle class, and a freedom from assumption and dictation on the part of the higher—not common in any of those districts of rural England wherein the squire and the parson are absolute, and the farmers, whether leaseholders or tenants-at-will, largely dependent on the favour of their landlords. These last, manly as is their spirit, sincere as is their attachment to their natural leaders, have not that tradition of perfect social freedom, that family pride in an inheritance and a name as old as those of the Percies and the Grahams, which give the peasant of the Border counties a position too secure to need the shadow of self-assertion. I noted the presence of one stalwart old “heritor,” as he would be called beyond the Solway, whose lineal ancestor, holding the self-same acres, was among the English archery cut down by Randolph’s cavalry at Bannockburn; and a younger acquaintance whose “forbears” took part in the “Pilgrimage of Grace,” and were duly hanged by the Royal Tiger; but, having left the heir of the house at home, preserved the lands and the still extant dwelling they held so much dearer than life or limb.

We had but taken our seats and disposed of our *impedimenta* when Vere entered the reading-desk and there read one or two collects and prayers selected from the Liturgy; the regular Evening Service being reserved for a later hour. Then, ascending the pulpit,

and opening his manuscript—it was his practice on all occasions except in these afternoon Lectures to preach extempore—he read his text from the fifteenth chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians:—“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain.”

“The tendencies of the present age,” he said, “impose upon the clergy a duty, I may say a necessity, such as has not been so manifestly laid and urged upon them by the conditions of any former period since the conversion of Constantine: I might almost add since the days in which St. Paul dwelt so strongly on the truth enunciated in this text. We are challenged and enforced to defend the fundamental principles, to set forth in argument and bring home to our hearers the essential evidences, of the Christian Faith. It is not merely that the very foundations of Christianity are attacked by sceptical assailants of great intellectual skill, of profound learning, and of unquestionable honesty. Such men have made such attacks in every age when it has been possible for them to do so without imperilling their lives. Some of them have at other times, and in countries where Christian bigotry has been most rampant and most powerful, endured torture and death for their disbelief with a courage and conscientiousness well worthy of comparison with those displayed by *our* ‘noble army of Martyrs’ whose testimony to their Christian belief was given from the stake or in the arena, whose blood has been the seed of the Church. But when the offensive in this strife of opposite convictions is assumed only by individuals fighting an uphill battle against the assured and accepted faith, hereditary or personal, of a believing

generation, the views of the assailants are commonly set forth in books which hardly reach the homes of Christians. The hostile arguments are then addressed chiefly if not exclusively to a specially studious minority. They do not disturb the established ancestral faith of the Church, seldom seducing more than a few isolated and wavering members from her fold—and therefore the leaders and authorities of the Church have thought, probably with reason, that such assaults at such periods should not be answered or discussed from the pulpit. Like the wars of former days, the strife is waged by small regular armies, and only the complete and signal defeat of their professional defenders would bring its evils home to the untrained many. At such times and in such warfare it suffices to meet the enemy on their own ground and with their own weapons, to answer their books with books equally learned and likely to have a scarcely more extensive circulation. But we have fallen on other days. It almost seems as if the work of the Apostles might have to be done over again, without the special advantages they enjoyed, as eye-witnesses of the facts on which the evidences of the Faith, the foundations of the Christian creed are laid, and as companions of the Master Himself. When St. Paul addressed the Corinthians in the letter from which I have taken my text—a letter which was to all appearance the earliest of the now extant Christian writings, the first in date of those ecclesiastical records which have been preserved to our own time, and which are entered on the canon of the New Testament—he was preaching Christianity and its paramount doctrines—the Resurrection of its

Founder and the future Life as proven by that Resurrection—to an incredulous world. He and the other Apostles whose work was more limited (apparently for the most part confined to the Jewish communities of Western Asia) and whose direct influence on the Church has consequently been far less than his, had to insist chiefly on the evidences miraculous and other of the truth they preached as attested by their own knowledge; because they had to establish that truth in the face of hostile opinion or of contemptuous indifference. It was from the Council of Nicæa until lately—save in exceptional instances—the task of their successors in the pastoral function to educate in an hereditary faith a people predisposed to hear them, or to enforce the moral lessons and the spiritual meaning of the Gospel by appeals to the recognized authority of Scripture and of the Church and to admitted historical truths. Within the last quarter of a century, however, scepticism has gained ground, especially among the more educated and thoughtful classes, with such alarming rapidity that it is no longer possible for a preacher to feel any confidence that he is addressing hearers with whom he stands on common ground; that few if any who listen to him are disposed to doubt or deny the very foundations of his teaching. I so far agree with the judgment expressed in former ages, and even within the memory of men now living, by the official chiefs of the Church and by her wisest and most judicious counsellors, that I studiously avoid, when addressing my parishioners at large after our regular services, any reference that might suggest doubts and difficulties to minds which probably would not otherwise be disturbed

thereby. The principal duty of the clergy is still 'edification;' the building up in the minds and consciences of their hearers of a sound Christian character, a clear solid Christian faith; and such edification or building-up is impossible if it is to be interrupted by frequent probing of the foundation whereon it must rest. But it is equally impossible to construct any moral edifice on foundations not strongly and distinctly laid; impossible to form a Christian creed or a Christian character on the basis of assumptions consciously or unconsciously doubted by those whose spiritual nature is to be the subject of that instruction and elevation. Therefore it is that I confine myself at the regular services of the Church to the enforcement or application of her doctrines. Therefore also it is that I consider it my duty to take these special occasions of discussing in presence of those who are interested therein, or who have been disturbed thereby, the theological controversies of the age. All but the youngest among us can remember the time when in almost every society the truth of Christianity was taken for granted; when it would have been regarded as an affront had a speaker assumed the possibility that any of those with whom he was conversing so doubted any of the fundamental principles of our creed, that their right to the Christian name could be challenged without offence. But within the last twenty years, I might say almost within the last decennium, a great change has taken place in this respect. Among men at least, doctrines incompatible not merely with scriptural teachings but with the very bases of all religion are freely canvassed; and—whereas not long ago courtesy obliged each to assume that his

neighbour was a Christian—there now seems a growing tendency to take for granted that a man of science, or a man of critical culture and learning, is probably a doubter or a disbeliever. The upholders of the faith, whether bound to it by professional duty or influenced merely by deep personal conviction, are thrown on the defensive: have once more to deal, if not with an openly hostile world, yet with a growing hostility among men of especial cultivation—among the class of thinkers, scientific investigators, and historical students—not wholly unlike the feeling which prevailed among the disciples of the Porch, the Garden, and the Academy, when they first heard that a new worship, a new religion, was taught and was gaining ground, founded on the alleged revival and reappearance from the grave of a Jewish enthusiast, who had died upon the cross as a felon, or as a traitor to the Roman dominion. The contemptuous scepticism of the Platonists, the good-humoured ridicule of the Epicureans, the haughty intellectual indignation of the Stoics, are severally reproduced to-day among different classes and schools of the men who consider themselves and whom the world is disposed to recognize as intellectual leaders and guides.

“As when St. Paul wrote his first letter to his Corinthian disciples, so to-day, the Resurrection is the fundamental tenet of Christianity, the citadel of the faith, the point most obnoxious to hostile criticism, the point most essential to the very existence of the Church and of Christianity itself. It is the one miracle which can hardly be explained away, about which no compromise is possible, upon which believers and unbelievers are

necessarily brought to a distinct and direct issue; which must either be an absolute, unqualified, monstrous and almost unaccountable fiction, or a solemn vital all-important truth. The critics who have devoted all the knowledge acquired by the study of a lifetime, like Strauss—all the powers of a keen imagination sharpened by careful local examination and by extensive if not profound learning, like Renan,—to construct what may pass for a theory or an account of the life of Christ, without admitting either the reality of His alleged miracles, or even the historical fact of His pretension to work miracles, find themselves brought if not to a standstill yet to a very grave perplexity, before this paramount, positively affirmed, inexplicable miracle; attested as it is not merely by particular records but by the whole tenor of the scriptural narrative; by every word of the teaching of the Apostles, and above all by the life and history of the Apostolic Church. If, again, a man's faith in the actual literal truth of other miraculous stories be shaken, he may still remain in all essential points a Christian; may still recognise the authority of the Saviour; may still feel his whole life influenced and controlled by the impressive unequalled authority which the promise of immortality gives to Christ's teaching, and which rests ultimately and essentially on the proof of that immortality afforded by the resurrection of the Master Himself. But he who has once ceased to believe that Christ actually whether in the flesh or not rose from the dead, has to all intent and purpose ceased to be a Christian. It might be shown—though I do not believe that it can ever be shown, and though each year of deeper study more clearly con-

vinces me that it is not true—that we have no sufficient evidence for our belief that our Lord opened the eyes of the blind, or restored to life the dead or seemingly dead: we might find it difficult to answer the arguments by which such sceptics as I have named seek to reduce the story of the loaves and fishes to the level of Heathen myths, representing it as a metaphor or as an exaggerated phrase misunderstood and turned into an alleged material fact and palpable fiction; and yet we might retain everything that is essential, not merely in the moral and spiritual teaching of Christ, but in the hope and the promise He has given us, and even in the theology which Councils and Fathers have elaborated out of the simple statements of the Gospels and Epistles. But if once our complete unhesitating belief that Christ actually rose from the dead—actually expired on the cross, was actually laid in the grave, and sometime afterwards actually appeared in person before His disciples—could be shaken or broken up by the arguments of adverse criticism, or by the growing reluctance of the age to believe in anything inconsistent with that regular course of nature whose invariability science in its fresh developments ever more and more peremptorily asserts—then indeed would our preaching be vain: then indeed would Christianity itself be lost, because nothing exclusively Christian would remain to us. We could build no Church on the moral precepts, of which probably very few were absolutely new or original, nor yet on the mere earthlife wherein these were incarnated and personified. That tremendous sanction which the hope of immortality gives to the commands of our Lord, and the seal which His own exceptional resurrection

sets upon that promise of immortality, would be gone for ever. Christianity stands or falls by the Resurrection, and by the Resurrection alone.

“I have said, and I repeat it, that the Resurrection cannot be explained away, after the fashion in which all the other miracles to which the Gospel narratives testify have been, to the satisfaction of sceptics, reduced to mere exaggeration, to moral parables mistaken for historic realities, or to simple fictions. For those miracles we have the testimony of one, two, three, or at least four separate accounts. It is possible that any one of these miraculous stories may be an interpolation. It is possible, again, that the several accounts may all have been derived from one original narrative, as some few very impartial writers seem now inclined to suppose; that there existed from a very early period certain *Memoirs of the Apostles*, from which at least the three first or so-called synoptical Gospels have been derived. But I do not think that any thoroughly candid and careful students, any sound and lucid thinkers versed in Scripture and Church history, will after full enquiry be disposed to listen seriously to any such explanation of the great central miracle of the faith. It is attested by every one of the Gospels. It is attested by the positive affirmation of St. Paul, in that which, as I have said, is probably the earliest extant Christian writing. St. Paul had most assuredly conversed on the subject often and earnestly with more than one alleged eye-witness of the fact, to whose testimony, in the chapter from which I have taken my text, he directly and personally appeals. If there were in being prior to the compilation or composition of the

earliest of the existing Gospels any such work as that whose priority is suspected as I have said by some careful enquirers—but whose utter disappearance, if it even existed, seems to me inexplicable and all but incredible—no candid man will venture to doubt that that work contained some account of the Resurrection not essentially different in its main features from that which we now possess. Above all things, it is certain that the Eleven believed during their whole after-lives that their Master had risen from the dead, and that they had since seen Him. This last and central fact of the story is perhaps the only one about which no cavil, no dispute is possible; against which no discrepancy of order or detail between the several accounts handed down to us has the slightest weight. This belief of the alleged eye-witnesses, if it were mere belief, would be a very grave, an almost conclusive testimony. It is without parallel in history, even in that history of human delusions which is so full of inexplicable marvels. There exists no record of a spectral illusion, admitted to be such, seen by three persons at once. I doubt whether the mere fact that a vision had been seen by two persons simultaneously—those persons not being twins, husband and wife, mesmerist and patient, or persons united by some other of those bonds of physical and moral sympathy which are among the strangest and least understood of the phenomena known as occult—would not, in the opinion of the vast majority of impartial students of such matters, be morally if not logically conclusive proof that the vision had at least some foundation in objective external reality. Now in the case before us we

have either a spectral illusion common to eleven persons at least—St. Paul says to five hundred—and a spectral illusion apparently repeated many times; or else a fact. But this is not all. It is not merely that the Apostles believed firmly to the end of their days that they had seen and spoken with their risen Lord: it is that this belief dominated the whole course of their after-existence, and has dominated for eighteen centuries the course of civilization, the morality of nations, the history of the world. When, instead of being crowned King of the Jews, our Lord died on the cross, helpless, friendless, powerless,—the victim of that Jewish priesthood which was, in the hope of His disciples, to have accepted Him as sovereign—by the sentence of that Roman Power which in their hope He was as Messiah to have overthrown;—when (to set aside all those peculiar ideas of His followers about whose reality there can exist little reasonable doubt, but which might be challenged by thoroughgoing critical Pyrrhonists) His defeat seemed sealed and attested by His death—the Eleven and the rest of His adherents were dismayed, thunder-stricken, appalled. They had lost their faith in Him, lost evidently the very foundation of that hope and trust which, whether inspired by miracles or simply by the personal ascendancy of His nature, had sustained them up to that point. They were crushed, cowed, despairing. Within a very short time—according to the concurrent testimony of all the accounts within two or three days—their attitude of mind was completely, utterly, *irrevocably* changed. From deepest despair they reverted to a confidence firmer, fuller, more profound than they

had ever felt before; and that assurance in the Faith which had repeatedly faltered in the presence of their Lord Himself, never for a moment wavered again. If there be one single fact in the whole of the New Testament whereon we can rely, it is this. If there be one fact in history proved beyond reasonable doubt or dispute, it is this. I repeat that on the Friday evening the Apostles and the rest of the little flock were sunk in the depth of desolation and darkness, utterly confounded, apparently believing themselves deceived as well as defeated and undone. On the Monday they had regained confidence, an inward conviction and certainty far stronger than the personal presence, the irresistible moral ascendancy of their living Master had ever given them. Not the roar of the mob, not the menaces of the priesthood, not the severities of the Government, not scourges, not chains, not the axe or the cross—could shake or even alarm them. They were able to communicate this assurance to thousands in their own generation, to tens of thousands in that which followed them; so that those multitudes who caught the contagion of their confidence not merely accepted death without abject terror, but welcomed it, nay often invoked it with eagerness and delight; smiled back calm passionless defiance to the howls and execrations of the amphitheatre, and stood firm without arms offensive or defensive, to await the fierce spring of the fasting lion. *What had happened between Friday evening and Monday morning?* This question the sceptic should answer if he is to expect from us serious practical attention to his unbelief. *What could* have occurred in that short interval—save the one thing affirmed by those who alone knew

it, and confirmed by the power it gave them over others—that could have produced on the minds of frightened half-educated men the effect we *know* to have been produced; the effect attested by its consequences not merely in the life of the Apostles themselves but in the subsequent triumph of the Church, in the conquest of Europe, in the whole history of Christendom, in the state of the world at this moment? Accept as a truth the Resurrection of the Master, and all is clear and consistent. I care nothing—comparatively speaking—for His recorded prophecies; for the purposes of my present argument, I lay no emphasis on the sanction which the special exceptional nature of His Resurrection is supposed to give to claims asserting His Divine or at least His superhuman character,—claims made much more often and eagerly for Him than by Him. The point on which I would insist is simply this; that between the Friday sunset and the Monday morning of that first Easter week, something occurred which not merely restored the courage and faith of the disciples but taught them to look alike on the death of their Master and on their own in an utterly new light—a light that never before in human experience, not for patriot martyrs or martial heroes, not for philosophers or prophets, not for Socrates or Hannibal, not for David or Isaiah, had broken on the utter darkness of the grave. Something had happened, which, for those who witnessed it and for those to whom they were so strangely able to impart the fulness of their own conviction, converted the hour of ruin into that of triumph, the Cross into a Throne, the wreath of thorns into the Crown not of Judæa but of the Universe. Something had hap-

pened which caused not merely the eye-witnesses of the event but all whom those eye-witnesses could influence—and the extent and duration of that influence is itself a marvel—to look forward to their last hour (though their path out of this world should lie through agony and horror, through the tortures of Nero's garden and the terrors of the arena) with passionate exultation. If the incident which did occur was the Resurrection of Christ, then all these consequences hang together. His return to life not merely refuted the timid inferences drawn from His death—not merely showed that that death was no defeat but the sublimest of victories—but also set the seal on that promise of immortality which after all is to all who really lay hold on it with heart-felt faith, to every Christian man and woman, the best and dearest of all hopes and all blessings; which was assuredly, in the first centuries of its growth, the principal, the vital, the irresistible attraction held out by Christianity to rich and poor, to slave and freeman. What other conceivable event could at once have re-established on the instant in tenfold strength the personal faith and loyalty of the disciples to their Master, *and also* utterly changed for them and all whom they could convince the aspect of death? Nothing, I conceive, but either the real or the apparent return to life of their dead Lord.

“Real or apparent. But of course I am aware how often, baffled by irresistible proof that all the little band of witnesses unquestionably and unquestioningly believed in the Resurrection, sceptics have striven to account for that belief by some suggestion compatible with its unreality. The Apostles ‘saw somebody like

their Master, and were so utterly silly, so absurdly credulous, so easily converted from despair to confidence—so ready for a second revulsion of feeling, and that the most tremendous which human minds had ever undergone—that the mere chance sight of some one resembling the Master satisfied them at once that the most stupendous of recorded miracles had occurred.' Really I can hardly condescend to answer what can scarcely have been put forward as a serious argument. Or, again—'Christ never died on the cross, and revived in the grave to natural corporal life.' If so, why were all His friends deceived? What became of their revived Chief? I should treat this suggestion with little more respect than I have shown to the former, had it not received some hesitating support from one or two writers whose literary repute and success in other fields afford a guarantee that they have not put forth to the world this suggestion till they had carefully considered, and deliberately judged it worthy of investigation if not of belief. But, I confess, few eccentricities of human thought, few of the 'follies of the wise,' ever surprised me more than the acceptance, or half-acceptance—dubious, hesitant, ambiguous as it was—of this extraordinary supposition by an author known to have read widely if not deeply on the subject. A man generally careful and wary could only have been led into such a departure from his usual caution in expressing startling views by want of that familiarity with the character of the time, and with some all-important conditions of the situation, which a thorough classical education would have given. Evidently his

imagination fails to realize even faintly what the real situation was, to apprehend the variety of wild improbabilities, I might say moral impossibilities, involved in the hypothesis to which he has given a hasty if partial sanction. It is said, and with force, that the story of the guard at the Sepulchre is on historic grounds alone all but incredible. No one acquainted with Roman discipline has found it otherwise than most difficult to believe that Roman soldiers could have dared to carry to their commander a confession of having slept at their post. Rather than quit his station without orders, under circumstances the most appalling, circumstances which would certainly have secured him from punishment, the Roman sentinel at Pompeii perished amid the shower of ashes which buried the city; remaining at "attention" while every one else was flying through the gate he guarded. The habit of military obedience was unshaken by what must have seemed the crash of a falling world. And we are to believe that the comrades of such a soldier, trained under the same merciless discipline of the legion, were bribed to accuse themselves of a military crime which even the incomparably milder discipline of modern and Christian armies has almost invariably punished with death! Again, no one who realizes the contempt of a Roman noble or officer for a people like the Jews can admit that the promise of the Pharisees or the Priests to intercede for them would seem to Roman soldiery worth an *iota*. The improbability of this story—which, after all, is obviously told at second-hand, since the Apostles could not know what passed in the

Jewish Council or the Roman camp—has been used from age to age, by writer after writer, as one of the strongest grounds for distrusting the veracity of the general narrative. The hypothesis that Jesus did not die on the Cross involves far greater incongruities. He was crucified by Roman soldiers familiar with that form of punishment and with its common effects. Now crucifixion was a slow and lingering form of capital punishment. In order to render it such the victim was very often fastened only with ropes; the nails not being a support but hastening death, and being therefore rather a mercy than an additional torture. It must have been among the most common and familiar incidents of crucifixion that the victim should go off into a death-like swoon. It is a thousandfold more likely that an English hangman, in the days when Jack Ketch had daily practice in his trade, should be mistaken as to the death of a felon on the gallows, than that a Roman soldier should be deceived by the swooning of a crucified sufferer. The taking down the bodies from the crosses on Calvary was, as is made evident by the narrative itself, a most unusual proceeding. As a rule men hung on the cross for two or three days before death. The approach of a Sabbath of peculiar sanctity induced the Jewish Council to insist on, and Pilate to grant, the removal of the crosses at sunset on the day of crucifixion. The thieves were not dead—it would have been very strange if they had—and the executioners therefore gave the *coup de grâce* by breaking their legs, a shock sufficient to kill when the body and nerves were exhausted by the terrible torture of the unnatural

attitude which formed the essential cruelty and the deadly agony of crucifixion. Jesus was so evidently dead, that, according to the story, this precaution was not taken. Observe here the strange and manifold inconsistency of the most thoroughly loyal and impartial sceptics. The absence of the *coup de grâce* and the infliction of the spear-wound rest on exactly equal authority—yet every critic who doubts the death by implication admits the first and denies the second (for doctors tell me that the ‘blood and water’ indicate an injury which must have been mortal). Again, the death is the essential fact of the story and therefore better attested than the absence of the leg-breaking; yet the sceptic accepts implicitly the trivial detail and rejects the central, vital, best-assured point in the whole evidence: for of course Jesus could not have gone about after His supposed revival with broken limbs. Remember that the ordinary infliction in such a case of the *coup de grâce* is an implied condition of the whole story: men seldom or never died on the cross in a few hours, and therefore we should naturally assume that, when the three bodies were taken down on Friday evening, either death was clearly ascertained or means were taken to inflict death at once. And that careful investigation which the situation implies is expressly affirmed by the narrator. The executioners would assume that Jesus was *not* dead, till it had been made clear that He was. It is simply incredible that soldiers who must have seen scores of men swoon under similar circumstances should have taken no care to ascertain that Jesus had not so swooned. Again, if He were not dead, how

came He to recover so speedily and so completely that within two days He was walking about? How was it that no one but His friends ever recognized Him? And, finally, what became of Him at last? I do not dwell on the fact that not one single incident of the story, as told in any one of the five narratives we have, is compatible with such a supposition: for four of these narratives are challenged as mythical by those who embrace this extravagant hypothesis, and St. Paul says little or nothing of the Crucifixion itself and the attendant circumstances.

“The only intelligible rational suggestion which does not admit a distinct and astounding miracle is that which places the reappearance of our crucified Lord among those ghostly apparitions of which so many are on record, and of which not a few are attested by circumstances and evidence that would suffice to hang any man, however high his character, however improbable the charge against him, before the most incredulous judge and before a jury every member of which was opposed to capital punishment. But this supposition only alters the nature and character of the problem; it does not in anywise get rid of the marvellous or even of the so-called supernatural element of the narrative. If the whole story be not an impudent fiction—if St. Paul did not deliberately repeat a lie, which all the other Apostles could have contradicted; or if there were not a conspiracy among them, which could have no motive compatible with what we know of their state of mind, to palm off a falsehood upon the world at the risk of their lives, and without chance of reward—it is certain that the case was not one of

spectral illusion; for I believe that no spectral illusion (proved to be such) is ever known to have occurred to two people at once; and no ghost has ever appeared under circumstances at all approaching in frequency and persistency of presentment, or in opportunity of verification those attested by St. Paul and by the Evangelists. The Apostles did not expect such an apparition; neither did the women to whom it seems that Christ first presented Himself. If, then, the Resurrection be simply a ghost-story verified by an unparalleled concurrence of testimony, the rational inference would be—not that Christ did not rise but—that ghostly apparitions are actually possible, and that our Lord did appear as a spirit, after His death on the Cross, to those who had known Him in life. Such a conclusion is precisely that to which those who endeavour in this way to get rid of the miracle of the Resurrection are most averse; so that I need hardly enlarge further upon this view of the case. Almost the only incident incompatible with such a supposition is the special converse with the doubting Thomas; and this may have been an interpolation, or its apparent purport may be due to some accidental mistranslation very natural in a Greek record of words spoken probably in Aramaic or some other Eastern dialect. I may point out, by the way, that the little circumstances so most relied on by sceptics to render the story of the Resurrection ridiculous—the eating and drinking, and so forth—are reproduced in the alleged phenomena of modern Spiritualism; phenomena which, however adulterated by deliberate imposture or semi-conscious exaggeration and even falsehood, no one who has con-

scientifically and extensively studied them can impute in their entirety to mere jugglery and wilful deception.

“Before I conclude, there is another point on which I must for a few moments dwell. Sceptical critics almost invariably write and speak as if Our Lord had appeared among a barbaric people and in a credulous age. The fact is that the era of Augustus and Tiberius was that of a civilization the most sceptical, the most scientific, the most thoroughly incredulous and materialist of any that the world seems to have known between the age of Rameses and that of Napoleon. The nations surrounding the Mediterranean were at that time what France, Germany, England, and the United States now are; the centre and seat of intellectual culture, of religious indifference, of practical observation, of negative philosophy. At no period in history, prior to the latter half of the seventeenth century, could a religious teacher pretending to miraculous powers have found himself at a greater disadvantage whether from the temper of the many, or the culture of the few. The prevalent philosophy was that of Epicurus: its principal rival apparently the scepticism of the Academy, refined and exaggerated into something approaching the absolute negations of Pyrrhonism. A myth would I conceive have less chance of growth at that point of time than at any other that could be named before the age of newspapers. An alleged resurrection from the dead would find no more easy credence from Gamaliel and Caiaphas, from Pilate and Festus, than from the contemporaries of Lord Bacon or of Voltaire. That within the lifetime of a single generation a complete mythical history relative to facts alleged to have occurred in

public, in the capital of a Roman province—a false narrative full of miracles crowned by the most astounding of all miracles—should have grown up and been eagerly accepted by scores of thousands, is almost as improbable as that the same thing should occur in our own times. It is certain that St. Paul—a man learned (it seems) in the best learning of his time, a scholar who might have debated in the schools of Athens, or pleaded before Tiberius in the presence of the Senate—within a few years after the event, was somehow or other converted to the belief that one whom he had bitterly and actively hated as a traitor to his creed and nation was in fact a prophet, and something more than a prophet; that a Galilean artisan had miraculously risen from the grave, thus elevated immeasurably above the greatest and most sacred personages of Jewish history, if we except the dubious instance of Elijah; an idea utterly repugnant to the whole tendency of Jewish thought, whereof Saul was a typical representative. Further, I repeat that neither St. Paul nor any other of those less cultivated fellow-believers on whose eyewitness in part at least he must have accepted this statement, were ever shaken for a moment in their absolute conviction of its truth. Again, it is true that we have little or no unquestionable testimony to the existence of our present Gospels till the middle of the second century. But we have indubitable external testimony to the existence of *some* Memoirs of the Apostles at a much earlier date. In the Gospel narrative itself we have the strongest possible internal testimony to the fact that, within forty or fifty years after the Crucifixion, either one of the present Gospels or a

written narrative of such supreme authority that no one dared to alter or omit any part of its contents was in existence and to all appearance received by the Church. I refer to the passage in which St. Matthew (*vide* 24th chapter) records the prophecy of our Lord regarding the destruction of Jerusalem. In that passage the fall of the Jewish capital is entangled in inseparable confusion with that destruction of the world which the first generation of Christians apparently expected to occur in their own lifetime. Now a writer independently recording such predictions after the event, and knowing that the fall of Jerusalem had *not* been followed immediately or speedily by the universal cataclysm, would not have recorded in these peculiar terms predictions which in their present form were certainly not fulfilled, and which, since in that form they had to his knowledge been falsified, he could not have thought himself obliged to accept and preserve as of Divine authority. In short, it is difficult for a Christian critic, however highly he esteems the loyalty or even the inspiration of the Gospel writers, to believe that this prophecy in its present form was recorded at a later date than some three or four years at most after the capture of Jerusalem by Titus. It is still more inconsistent on the part of a sceptic to assign to it a later date, since by his theory the writers have more or less modified their narrative to suit their own conception of what were or should have been the facts, so that St. Matthew would not have hesitated to put this record in accordance with such events as he had already witnessed. Therefore both parties, but especially those who deny the essential trustworthiness of the Evangelists, are impaled on one

or other horn of a dilemma. Either this passage, and the rest of the book of which it is an inseparable part, was written within at most some forty years after the Crucifixion and while many of the original disciples were still alive—a view which at once disposes of the mytho-poietic theory, since so short a period in such an age and country allows no time for the development of an elaborate myth, a kind of fiction which indeed can scarcely grow up till all the eye-witnesses to the truth have disappeared—*or* the writer of the present Gospel copied from a record so highly revered that he dared not modify a single expression in one of its most perplexing passages. Now if the Evangelists had before them a writing of this character, we must assume that their narratives essentially agree with it; since it is evident that one at least among them—not distinguished from the others (according to the internal testimony of his work) by exceptional scrupulosity—feared to save the credit of an inspired prophecy by departing from the text thereof; and if such a work, so revered, ever existed in the Church, its utter disappearance is simply incomprehensible. At any rate either we have (in the Gospel of St. Matthew) the immediate testimony of a writer recording the facts within less than half a century after their occurrence, and while the eye-witnesses were living and probably some of them within his reach; or we have at second-hand several narratives, all of them copied in part and derived more or less throughout from still earlier records, to which Christian opinion had already attached a peculiar authority and almost sanctity. In either case the testimony of the Gospels to the fact of the Resurrection carries with it all the

weight necessarily belonging to evidence liable when published to be corrected by living witnesses; and gives very strong independent confirmation to the essential substance of St. Paul's story. The variations of the story, as given by the three earlier Evangelists, are hardly compatible with the idea of copying from a common source. The reasonable inference then is, that we have one if not three Gospels—at least St. Matthew's—written in the lifetime of the Apostles. The chief variation—as regards the Resurrection itself and the appearances immediately following—is in the chronological order of the facts. The general tenor of each narrative is clear and coherent and they agree on the critical points. They testify distinctly and positively to the belief of nearly a score of persons that they had together and separately seen and spoken with the Lord after His Resurrection. An entirely independent witness testifies that he, after frequent intercourse with the eye-witnesses, if not in consequence thereof, had a firm belief in the same story; and also assures us that not merely a score but no fewer than five hundred persons had at one and the same time seen the same miraculous apparition. This evidence, powerful as it is, may not satisfy all critical enquirers: nay, I can more or less, after long experience of its frequency among men of unquestionable candour, understand the state of mind which induces some thoughtful and unprejudiced students—considering the extraordinary character of the statement—to reject it. But assuredly it is neither candid nor reasonable to cast aside such testimony as feeble or trivial. It is as strong as it well could be, as strong or stronger than the testimony on

which we accept any historical event not recorded in writing almost immediately after its occurrence by a historian in communication with eye-witnesses, and published during the lifetime of the latter. The essential central all-important fact of that life-history on which Christianity is founded is, then, so authenticated that its falsehood involves a moral marvel or miracle almost if not quite as great—almost if not quite as ‘incredible’—as the physical miracle or marvel attested. Our faith therefore rests on a foundation which, if it do not force the assent of all human reason, yet amply justifies to the clearest, calmest, and least partial intelligence the belief which the Church has entertained for more than eighteen centuries; and on which none among us could lose his hold without feeling that he had sustained the heaviest loss to which human thought is liable.”

The ladies drove home as they had driven to Church. We waited for Vere, and walked with him towards the Parsonage.

“There is one point in your sermon,” said Cleveland, “which some sceptics might be disposed to challenge. What evidence have you of that *immediate* revulsion in the feelings of the Apostles whereof you speak? What proof is there that they recovered their confidence prior to the day of Pentecost—except of course in the narratives as they stand, upon which you can hardly base an argument intended to convince those who doubt whether those narratives, St. Paul’s excepted, were written within a century after the events they record.”

“I think,” said Vere, “that internal evidence and the probabilities of the case show that the story, as

given in the Gospels and the Acts, truly represents the temper of the disciples and its rapid changes. I can not see what motive should induce a writer anxious to make out the best possible case for the Church—and this is the position imputed by sceptics to the Evangelists—to represent the disciples as more utterly confounded and dismayed by their Master's death than they actually were. Remember that such absolute dismay implies, even from our point of view, that they had forgotten most extraordinarily precise and distinct declarations of our Lord predicting His death and resurrection. By our antagonists, their forgetfulness is constantly employed to discredit the reality of these prophecies. How then disbelieve their own declaration, or that of their immediate pupils, that they had temporarily forgotten prophecies so vitally important and so likely to be recalled by the fulfilment of their first portion? Then—if we admit the utter confusion, the sense of defeat and deception existing among the disciples on Saturday—does not the mere fact that they did not disperse, break up, and abandon their creed within forty days, itself suffice to prove that some extraordinary change had taken place in their feelings; a change which must have been produced by some signal and striking incident? Again, in the story of Pentecost itself there is nothing to explain that *double* coincident change of mind on which I lay so much stress:—nothing to account for the unquestionable fact that whatever happened had this double effect. It not only completely reassured the disciples, giving them a far deeper and firmer confidence in their Master than they had shown during His life, but it also utterly

revolutionized the aspect in which we must assume that they—in common with all the rest of the world—had up to that time regarded death. To every one, however strongly he might uphold on natural or philosophical grounds the probability of a future existence, that probability seemed far too feeble and dim to overcome the instinctive horror and reluctance with which Greek and Barbarian, Roman and Jew, Aryan and Semite regarded the separation of soul from body: the departure of the former from the world lighted up by the sun. From the date assigned to the Resurrection, Christians ceased to regard death with fear, until Christianity had lost much of the vividness and reality of the impression it originally made on the minds that embraced it. And this was not due, as has been suggested, to the expectation of Christ's immediate coming within the lifetime of the Apostolic generation. That expectation, by inducing a hope that they might escape death altogether, would have tended to render Christians anxious to prolong life till the Lord's return by every means compatible with loyalty to Him: and long after it had been disappointed, the contempt of death and eagerness for martyrdom seem to have *grown* in force—as if the loss of Apostolic authority had rather relaxed the control of common-sense than damped the fire of enthusiasm or dimmed the clearness of conviction. It seems clear that these two changes of mental attitude on the part of the disciples—perhaps the two greatest revulsions of feeling ever undergone by human minds—were due to one single incident, occurring at any rate very soon after the Crucifixion: and nothing but a strong, overpowering, undoubting conviction that the

Lord had risen again will on any rational grounds account for either, much less for both and for their coincidence. Had no change taken place in the temper of the disciples they would as I say have dispersed long before Pentecost; and after all, the miracle of Pentecost has no meaning or worth except as a supplement to the Resurrection. Assuming the reality of the sudden influx of supernatural power and spiritual influence, and the accuracy of the Scriptural account (which few sceptics would grant), the advent of the Paraclete only assisted the Apostles in promulgating their faith. It does not help in the least to explain the faith itself. Again, from the earliest times, the first day of the week was regarded by Christians with peculiar veneration, and Easter-day with a higher reverence than any other religion has ever attached to any anniversary. It is evident, then, that from the very first the story of the Resurrection was inseparably connected with the Sunday following the Friday of the Crucifixion. In the absence of any sort of reason for assigning any other day or date to the incident, whatever it was, through which Christianity rose strengthened, assured, confident of victory from the grave of Christ, we ought, I think, to attach very great weight to the consistent and concurrent statements of all the witnesses whose narratives we possess. I think then that, on grounds common to sceptics and Christians, the latter are justified in peremptorily assuming that whatever marvel did occur, or seem to occur, to produce the effect alleged and admitted on all hands, occurred or seemed to occur between Friday night and Monday morning. Had it been long postponed the disciples

would in their then frame of mind have dispersed and given up the cause in despair. But the mere date is of comparatively little consequence to my argument; if it be only granted that within a very few days or weeks after the Crucifixion the Apostles positively affirmed and believed with unhesitating and absolute confidence that they had seen their Lord once more alive, and under conditions wholly unparalleled."

"Observe," said Sterne, "that no one of the accounts agrees with any other. Every one of them places the several incidents of the Sunday in a different order; and some insert very important occurrences not mentioned by the others; one or two of them obviously tending, I might say evidently intended, to anticipate and refute the more obvious objections likely to be made against the actual facts of death and resurrection; and therefore much more likely to have been invented by the relator than to have been wittingly omitted by other narrators."

"I admit," replied Vere, "the validity of both your objections from your point of view. But such an admission is inconsistent only with that verbal inspiration or infallible accuracy of the several narratives which few competent critics of the present generation have ever maintained. Is it not obvious that such perfect coincidence as verbal inspiration might have given would have been fatal to the acceptance of the story by men of critical temper or sceptical bias, when the evidence once became matter of written history? Therefore the most devoutly convinced Christian may well believe that, here as throughout the Gospel narrative, for reasons easily conceivable, verbal inspiration

and superhuman accuracy were intentionally withheld. We should have much more difficulty in sustaining against objectors the actual independence of several narratives exactly accordant, than in reconciling in essential points the differences of several witnesses whose independence is proved by those very differences. The main features of the story, however, are perfectly clear and coherent in nearly all the narratives. The grave, we are told, was found empty. Our Lord appeared first to certain women; then to the two or three apostles always most intimately associated with Him during His natural life; then to the Eleven, and afterwards on different occasions to other disciples. The appearance to five hundred brethren at once, of which St. Paul speaks, is not mentioned by any other writer. This would be fatal to all critical belief in its truth, had St. Paul written after the rest. But the order in which the various books of the New Testament are arranged by the Canon, ministers herein as in other cases to confusion and mistake. They are arranged generally speaking according to the chronology of their contents, not of their production. The letter from which I took my text was probably written long before the earliest of the Gospels; and some time prior to the composition of the Acts, or even of that part of the Acts which relates some of the individual adventures of St. Paul and his companions in the first person, and which, as some think, is a contemporary fragment imbedded in a composition of later date. It is strange perhaps that the writer of the Acts—if he were that personal companion of St. Paul whose memoir forms part of his work—should not have mentioned the fact

attested by the great Apostle; but since St. Paul is the earliest witness, the first narrator, we cannot suppose the apparition to the five hundred to be a later addition to the original account of the Resurrection—unless, indeed, it be an interpolation in the Epistle, which there seems no reason to suspect.”

“How,” inquired Sterne, “can you treat St. Paul as a trustworthy witness? In this very chapter he claims himself to have seen his Lord in a way which few but thorough-going believers can regard as other than a subjective vision. Why suppose that the apparition to the five hundred was any more real and objective than that to himself?”

“Obviously,” interposed Cleveland, “because one man may see a vision, and that vision may be a spectral illusion; but an apparition to five hundred persons must be an objective reality. St. Paul’s liability, if it were liability, to be misled by a spectral illusion would not in the slightest degree invalidate his trustworthiness as a reporter of facts not explicable as illusions, or of statements received from others. At the very worst, it could only prove that he had not physiological and pathological learning, or had not sufficient soundness of logic to distinguish between the impression produced on his brain by a sun-stroke and that produced by an actual phenomenon presented to his bodily eyes. Probably scarcely any person in that age did possess in fulness either qualification. I am not sure that any, I am sure that very few, possess them now. Are we then to suppose that no man of that age was—that only here and there a scientific specialist now is—a trustworthy witness to facts not capable of being

reduced to spectral illusions, or a competent reporter of the statements of others?"

"St. Paul," replied Sterne, "was so liable to self-deception that I should hardly choose to rely on his sole testimony on any point in which he was passionately interested. To suppose that he or any other of the primitive preachers or martyrs of the Church were conscious impostors would be absurd. But most of them were certainly wild enthusiasts; and St. Paul, with all his education and with all his eloquence, was perhaps the wildest enthusiast among them."

"Even so," said Cleveland, "it is difficult to comprehend the instantaneous change which turned his enthusiasm into a direction diametrically opposite to that it had previously pursued. Spectral illusions, or mental hallucinations of whatever kind, are apt to confirm rather than to contradict the previous tendency of the mind they affect. It is at least strange and improbable that the fancy of a furious Jewish persecutor of Christians should suddenly present to him the aspect and the voice of Christ as a denizen of heaven."

"It seems to me," said Sterne, "that putting aside the epistles of St. Paul, you have simply no evidence whatever respecting the facts of the Crucifixion. You rely entirely on a single passage in St. Matthew's Gospel to vindicate your belief that at least one of the four narratives was written before A.D. 75. Now it is notorious that the best critics regard St. Matthew's as probably the least trustworthy of the Synoptics; it is open to several objections not applying to the others. In the first place, the traditional Gospel said to have

existed among the Jews, or in the Church of Palestine—with which the orthodox defenders of Christianity try to identify the present first Gospel—was not written in Greek. It seems to be admitted that the present version was originally written in Greek, and is not a translation. Therefore our present Gospel of St. Matthew is not that traditional Gospel of St. Matthew with which it was identified in the pre-critical days. Again, while evidently written in Greek, it is as evidently written by a Jew for Jews, being full of references to the Old Testament, and particularly to prophecies which would have had no weight for the Gentiles. Again, if there be one thing more certain than another respecting the character of any one Gospel, it is that the writer of the first blundered headlong whenever he dealt with a prophecy. There is scarcely one of those he has quoted that he has not signally and even ridiculously misapplied. Yet it is on a single passage in this inexplicable and certainly untrustworthy book that you rest your fundamental assumption that we have in some shape either a contemporary record, or narratives taken from contemporary records of very high authority.”

“I cannot,” answered Vere, “enter at length into your criticism on the first Evangelist. I will only remind you that in his day as in ours the Jews were a scattered people. Though they had still a centre at Jerusalem and a country in Judea, they had for one reason or another dispersed themselves over the Roman and probably over great part of the Eastern world. In Alexandria, and there is reason to believe

in nearly every other great commercial city, there was not merely a great number of Jews but an organized Jewish community. To these probably, and to the proselytes they had made, St. Matthew addressed his Gospel as we have it now. Granting that he did not understand the sense of the prophecies he applies to Our Lord, this hardly invalidates his statement of facts."

"Take note," replied Sterne, "that one vital statement of fact is distinctly connected with a misapplied prophecy—'a bone of Him shall not be broken.' St. Matthew so closely works this in with his story of the Crucifixion and his evidence of actual death, that the manifest purpose of the statement, coupled with his blunder on the one point, renders his assertion on the other untrustworthy."

"I do not see that," replied Cleveland. "It is surely possible that a man may be a blundering interpreter of prophecy, and yet a perfectly trustworthy authority either as to facts he had seen or as to statements from eye-witnesses!"

"But," rejoined Sterne, "the identification of Christ with the Pascal lamb evinces a comparatively late composition. The idea was of gradual and not very early growth in the Church—viz., that the Passover was a symbol of the Crucifixion. That idea pervades the Revelations; a book undoubtedly late and in all likelihood spurious: a book which even Luther was hardly willing to admit into the Canon. If then the first Evangelist entertained this view, we have every reason to suppose that he wrote not in the first but in the second century; and though I grant the difficulty

of believing that a man of his character—writing rather as a controversialist than as a historian—recorded without modification a prediction (like that of his 24th chapter) which he must have known to be falsified by the event, yet this is merely a difficulty; not a proof of date which can weigh against the mass of varied evidence proving the lateness of the first Gospel.”

“We cannot,” said Vere, “argue out at length the authenticity of the various books of the New Testament. One thing I think all candid critics must admit: there is no doubt whatever that Jesus Christ was crucified at the date assigned. The internal evidence, and the impossibility of assigning a motive for falsehood—together with that evidence of the existence of some record fairly to be called contemporary as published in the Church while the first disciples were living (which, I repeat, seems to be furnished by the 24th Matthew)—renders it only reasonable to suppose that we have an essentially true account of that which the disciples themselves witnessed or which was publicly notorious. I think it must be granted that the Crucifixion took place substantially as we are told. Our Lord was crucified between two robbers; the bodies were taken down from the cross the same evening. Therefore the *coup de grâce* must have been given in some form or other, unless the death was so clear, so evident to men accustomed to witness crucifixions and familiar with death-like swoons on the cross, that they thought it not worth while to prove it by the usual method. That the *coup de grâce* was given by breaking the legs we ought to believe, because we can see no sort of motive for falsehood on this point, and because

the writers must have known what the practice actually was. Now remember that the fact that the legs of Jesus were not broken is vital to the theory that He was not dead: it is far more essential to that view than to any Christian theory. Again, as to the spear-wound, I grant that we have no sufficient proof thereof in the mere statement of one Evangelist; but we have very strong internal evidence on the point. There is no special reason conceivable for the invention of such a story; and if it had been invented it is very unlikely that the peculiar incident which alone gives it importance—the pouring out at once of blood and water, which, as I am told, indicates the piercing of the pericardium, and must have ensured death—should have been recorded by a writer who could hardly be supposed to know the significance of the fact. An observation which accords with a truth only ascertained in a much later age is verified by the strongest of probabilities; since nothing is less likely than that an ignorant inventor should have correctly represented a physical fact with which he could not well be personally acquainted yet which strictly accords with what we know would probably have been the case. If a Roman soldier did, in order to make sure of the death, or from mere wantonness, pierce the side of the crucified victim with a spear, he would naturally aim at the heart; and if he did aim at the heart the result would have been, as I am told, that which is actually represented in the story. Apologists justly lay great stress on the correctness of the New Testament in regard to the rank, titles, and names of particular Governors at the several dates of the narrative as clear proof of the

truth and authenticity of the record; since a late compiler or forger would not have known or thought of such details as the time at which different provinces were transferred from Senatorial proconsul to Imperial proprætors and the like; and a still greater value attaches to accuracy in details whose import was unknown to the writer. Again, the cohesion and internal probability of the whole narrative is very striking. Leave out the things which the Christians could not have known save by rumour—for example, what passed between the Pharisees and the guard, or what took place in the Council—the story is thoroughly reasonable and likely, and, in one word, hangs together completely. I repeat once more:—accept the Resurrection as a fact, and everything is clearly and simply accounted for. Suppose the whole story a myth founded on some obscure facts not involving any extraordinary incident, and we are landed in a maze of contradictions and absurdities whose irreconcilability and perplexity become more apparent the more closely we scrutinize the tale, and are made more and more striking by each successive attempt to construct a probable hypothesis without admitting the truth of the central fact of the Evangelical narrative. Moreover it is absolutely clear, unquestionably certain, that for years before the Epistle to the Corinthians was written the Christians—forming a community or Church in scores of different places—all believed that their Master had died on the cross, and had risen again. The wide acceptance of such a belief if not accordant with the fact in such an age, within some ten or fifteen years after the event, would be very extraordinary even had it prevailed only among people

predisposed to believe in and accept it. But observe what really happened. The disciples at the time of the Crucifixion were a small band of Galileans and Jews confined to a single district. Something happened after the Crucifixion which deeply and irrevocably fixed in their minds the conviction that their crucified Master had risen immediately from the dead. They went forth to preach this alleged fact exclusively among people who had no sort of reason for accepting it willingly. They addressed themselves at first chiefly to Jews, to whom their doctrine and the miracle on which it was founded were not merely unattractive but offensive. They addressed themselves secondly to Gentiles, chiefly Greeks, who had never heard the name of Jesus, who generally despised the Jews, and were as little disposed as men could be to readily believe in the revivification of any man, least of all of a Jew and a convicted criminal. Yet within a few years of the event a religion founded exclusively on this Apostolic statement, and without this statement devoid of all reason or meaning, was accepted—substantially in the form in which we now have it—by thousands originally either hostile or contemptuous. This fact alone appears to me to render the mythical theory simply untenable. Long before there had been time for the growth of a myth, even in prepared soil, the faith of which the Crucifixion and the Resurrection were the life, the sap, the very essence, had taken root so firm that nothing could shake it or prevent its growth, in soil the most unfavourable to any such plant. This alone would prove that the story differed in essence and character from every other myth recorded in the history of

human error or of false religions: and all the critics have failed to give even a plausible explanation of this unquestionable peculiarity of the case on any assumption not admitting the essential truth of the existing narrative. The books of Strauss and Renan are very interesting; their hypothetical stories very curious as specimens of human ingenuity. But their very elaboration contrasts strangely with the simple straightforward coherence of the Evangelical history, and I certainly cannot give to any one of them the epithet of plausible, much less of probable."

Vere here left us, and we walked on for a few minutes in silence.

Sterne then said—"I wish I had put a critical question to Vere as to his own belief, though perhaps it would have been hardly fair towards a clergyman. According to the Scripture narrative, that which rose from the dead and reappeared to the disciples on various occasions was the very body, the physical fleshly frame that had undergone crucifixion, nay, according to one story, the actual prints of the nails—which by the way at that time would not have been prints but cruel festering wounds, probably too severe and sore to permit motion—were pointed out to a sceptical disciple. Yet this body, this physical frame, had all the powers attributed to spirits by those in all ages who record the apparition of ghosts. It could pass through doors, it could appear and disappear, and finally it vanished, being taken up into the visible heavens. Does Vere believe that the body actually disappeared from the grave and was reanimated, or does he suppose that it was the so-called soul that reappeared in bodily shape to the disciples?"

“Well as I am acquainted with Vere,” said Cleveland, “I cannot undertake on his part to answer that question. What I will say on my own part is this: the facts or allegations on which the corporal resurrection or revivification of the body are affirmed are isolated incidents, and some of them are evidently employed if not invented for a controversial purpose—viz., to prove the resurrection of the physical frame. Take the story as a whole, and it becomes evident that what is described was a ghost or spirit possessed of attributes not compatible with the grossness of the material body. Again, the careful distinction drawn by St. Paul between the body of flesh which after death is laid in the grave and the spiritual body which will inhabit the other world seems to me on the whole incompatible with a distinct impression on his mind that the body of his risen Lord was the same body that had been buried. The strangest and wildest improbabilities of the actual narrative are those connected with the disappearance of the body from the grave. Reject these, and there is little in the story more strange than may be found in other well-attested apparitions, excepting the frequency and persistence of the reappearances. For myself, then, I distinctly decline to believe that the body ever rose from the sepulchre. If there were any Resurrection at all, I believe that it must have been that of the soul alone, though no doubt the soul presented to those who saw it—if it was seen—the same appearance that the body had worn in life, as has been the case with nearly every apparition on record.”

CHAPTER XVII.

DESIGN IN DEVELOPMENT.

ON another occasion we were sitting—all of those I have introduced to the reader, except the ladies—in the turret smoking-room, when, I forget exactly how, the conversation turned on the evidence of Creative Intelligence and Providential government.

“It has always seemed to me,” said Sterne, “that since most Theists admit that there is no actual proof—that there is no evidence capable of carrying conviction to minds entirely impartial, indifferent, or hostile—either of the existence of a Deity or of human immortality, the affirmative is little better than ridiculous.”

“Why more ridiculous,” inquired Gerard, “than the negative?”

“First,” answered Sterne, “because the negative is always to be assumed where the affirmative cannot be substantiated, or at least made to seem probable. The chances against any assumption or affirmation made at random and without proof are infinite. For example, neither you nor I know whether a pine-tree grows on a given spot in a particular island of the Atlantic. If you say that there is such a pine, and I deny it, we may both be fools for asserting what we do not know; but the chances are millions to one that you are wrong and

I am right. Now Deity and immortality are inventions of human imagination quite as baseless as the supposed existence of the pine at that particular spot. There is no shadow of evidence for either. And again, we have some notion how each of these ideas came into the minds of people; and in each case we see that their origin was utterly fallacious. I will not now discuss the second point, but confine myself to the first. Setting aside the notion of a primæval Revelation, itself devoid of evidence; we can see that prehistoric men believed in certain superhuman forces—the wind, the sea, the sun, the lightning, and so forth—and, having themselves no idea or experience of unintelligent force, they naturally ascribed to these superhuman powers human intelligence and will. Hence, presently they came to ascribe to them, or to some imaginary ruler of each, something like human form and features. It was long before any race—even the Semitic, among which the first extra-Egyptian civilization probably grew up—perceived such a correlation between the different forces of nature as induced them to ascribe first orderly obedience to supreme control, and afterwards simple unity, to the imaginary superhuman powers. The very name of God in the oldest biblical records proves that the unity ascribed to Him was of late growth. We all know that the name translated “God” is a plural—Elohim. Its connection with a verb in the singular shows that the writers of these earliest records had grasped the idea of unity in Nature or rather in the Power they recognized behind the laws of Nature. But it also shows how recent was that recognition. We see then that the original idea of God, or Gods, grew out of

a mistake; and nothing that has since happened, no subsequent discovery has given to that idea any real evidential sanction, or afforded a new and adequate basis in lieu of the confessed fallacy of the primary conception. We believe in one God simply because our remote ancestors believed that every force must be directed by a man-like intelligence; and since the cause of our belief was a blunder, the belief itself can hardly be reasonable."

"You forget," said Gerard, that the worship of natural forces does not seem to have been the oldest; and that, on the other hand, the earliest worship does not seem always to have given human form to supposed superhuman beings. The Egyptians, to all appearance the oldest of civilized races, worshipped animals and insects. The Assyrians, the founders of the next military empire known to history, worshipped the 'Host of Heaven,' and gave to the images of their Deities composite animal forms. The Hindoos have invested their gods with every sort of monstrous and incompatible physical shape."

"I think," said Sterne, "that if we could get back far enough—behind the highly refined and probably symbolic worships of Egypt and Assyria—we should find nature-worship at the bottom of all. The Hindoo gods, with their elephant heads, their hundred arms, and so forth, are but the efforts of a childish imagination to embody by symbol or by mere multiplication the idea of indefinitely enhanced force, transcending all known physical powers. The Hindoo religion seems to have been in the first instance—so far as we can fairly judge by existing relics and by survival of

character—one of the lowest and most abject forms of worship of pure force ever found even among a half-civilized people. The Assyrian compound shapes—the bull with wings and so forth—were symbols of force suggested by a higher and manlier imagination, such as seems natural in a race which, in its firstfulness of national vitality and imperial pride, was probably superior to any Oriental contemporaries. The Egyptian worship of the lower animals was almost certainly symbolic. The scarabæus, the calf, and so forth, were emblems rather than images of the productive powers ascribed to Deity; though the vulgar probably converted into the idol what the priesthood intended for a symbol; a frequent step in mythopoeitic progress. I have always thought that the Chaldean and other star-worship, like the fire-worship of the Parsees, originated in a scientific truth which it is strange that any race of men at so early an epoch in human history should so quickly and keenly, however dimly and vaguely, have apprehended:—the supreme importance of the sun as the vivifying source of all natural forces, and the generator of life on earth. Learning to adore the largest of the heavenly bodies, they naturally went on to worship the rest; though it is certainly curious that there is considerable doubt whether in the Chaldean system or in any other whose gods were identified with stars the sun was regarded as the chief deity.”

“I cannot admit,” said Cleveland, “that the idea of God—that is of a Creative Intelligence and, if you will, of a Providential government—is without proof. It could not perhaps have been *proved* till recently,

because it is only within the last century or two that a Creation itself has been demonstrated. Till lately there seemed no cogent or sufficient, certainly no conclusive evidence that the visible universe had not existed from eternity in something very like its present form. But scientific men now admit this not to have been the case. To take the Solar system alone, it is pretty generally agreed that there was a period when not only the earth, but the entire system whereof this planet forms a comparatively trivial part, was 'without form and void.' Most authorities incline to regard it as having been a glowing mass of vapour, probably a chaotic nebula. From chaos as a starting-point I think we may demonstrate the existence of an external Creative Power; and it can scarcely be supposed that the results which that Power has produced were accidental, or that the Power itself was unconscious of or non-intelligent in its action. My argument is briefly this. To bring the Solar system from the chaotic to the present condition must have taken a definite time under the influence of definite forces. Say that this operation occupied a billion of years;—the actual number matters nothing. What is essential is that the time must have been finite: the forces acting being definite and limited in power must have taken a definite period to produce a definite effect. Go back to the beginning of this billion of years. The forces in question had then not begun to act; in fact were non-existent. What set them going? Say if you will that the impulse was given by some law operating on a wider scale, which had at that moment come to

bear on our little Cosmos. That law also must have taken a definite time, say ten billions of years, to reach the point at which it thus came into effect. At the beginning of all, you must come to a time when the entire universe was inert and chaotic; as we are told by some astronomers that a time will come when it will be cold, lifeless, and probably motionless. There must have been a time when no laws, no forces, were operating within the infinite space now apparently occupied by countless suns, systems of suns, and systems of systems, in every stage of progress. Now force cannot originate itself; therefore there must have been an originator of the forces which you may allege to have worked out without help or guidance the actual result. That originator must surely have possessed will; otherwise it, or he, could hardly have given the impulse. It must have possessed intelligence, or it could hardly have given direction, coherence and system to the laws by which the Cosmos is confessedly governed, or to those by which it may be supposed to have been reduced to order and set in motion. It seems to me that we thus obtain actual proof of something which it is not foolish or unwarrantable to call God: a Will and an Intelligence capable of producing the stupendous system we now see around us in all its marvellous perfection of order, movement, life. The Being in whom that will and intelligence resided may not be, in the strictest sense of the words, perfect or absolute either in wisdom or in power. We can only discern that His wisdom and His power were infinitely beyond anything that we know or can conceive. That He was not unconditioned

I hold to be certain; for He who displayed the wisdom which has created the Universe, and the goodness which has filled our little planet with joyous life, would have made His work free from evil if He could have done so without sacrificing some object more essential than even the exclusion of evil and pain, *i.e.*, were He unfettered by conditions. I am inclined to suppose that He did not create matter but only vivified it by introducing law and force. Be this as it may, when once you admit the Universe to have begun in something utterly different from that which now exists, you must, I think, admit the logical force of the argument I have so roughly sketched out; which seems to me distinctly to demonstrate the existence of an intelligent Creator possessed of will and purpose as well as of power."

"You appear," said Dalway, "to think of our world, at least, much as the Portuguese king thought of the Universe:—*viz.*, that if you had been consulted at the outset you could have given the Creator some useful hints."

"No," said Cleveland. "If I had been endowed with perfect wisdom and perfect unconditioned power, I should hardly have made the world so imperfect—by which phrase I mean so defaced here and there by pain and suffering, and still more by moral evil—as it is. Therefore I conclude that a Creator in whose results I recognise such infinite goodness, such supreme skill, must have lacked that perfect freedom which would have enabled perfect wisdom to produce a perfect world. But, as you probably know, King Alphonso's remark has been justified by later discoveries. The

cosmical scheme assumed by the astronomy of his age, to which he applied his censure, was complicated in the extreme; and it was of that complicated scheme that he spoke so contemptuously. We have since learned that that scheme was utterly unreal; that the real system is so free from those supposed complications and so marvellously perfect in the attainment of gigantic varied results by a very few simple laws, that human wisdom stands astounded not more at the magnificence of the result than at the wonderful absence of complication in the means. In fact the Creator has worked as the king would have had Him work, only with of course infinitely greater skill and simplicity than the royal critic of the Ptolemaic system could have imagined."

"So simply," answered Sterne, "that I think the Universe might very possibly have dispensed with Him altogether."

"You remember, of course," said Dalway, "the argument that if the perfection of the universe implies a Creator, the still greater perfection of the Creator implies that somebody must have created Him?"

"I remember it," answered Cleveland, "but it does not bear on my argument. I admit that had the Universe, the Cosmos, existed from eternity in its present form—or rather, if we do not know that it has not so existed—we could hardly prove a Creator. My demonstration, as I think it, rests on the fact that the Universe having gradually reached its present state must have been subject to the operating forces only for a given time—must have been once inert. It had a beginning. That is the basis of my reasoning. Now we do not know, we have no reason to suppose that the Creator

had a beginning; and therefore my argument—which applies to the Cosmos not as so wonderfully constructed, but as constructed out of original chaos devoid of force,—has no application to a Being, or supposed Being, who may for aught we know have had no beginning but existed from all eternity.”

“There is, however,” said Gerard, “one logical difficulty which applies to the Creator as well as to creation. The past duration of the Universe as an orderly Cosmos, or as something progressing towards such a Cosmos, long as it must have been, is a mere point of time in the supposed eternal life of its alleged Author. If He existed for infinite ages before He chose to create, what motive could have led Him to create at one time rather than at another? Could there have been such a motive without supposing some caprice or change in Him; seeing that the original *inertia* you conceive yourself to have proved forbids any such change in the conditions of matter as may have made creation easier at one time than at another? The inert does not change.”

“I do not think much,” replied Cleveland, “of that extremely subtle and metaphysical reasoning. I will only say that there may have been conditions either in the matter or in Him who ordered it that fixed the date of creative activity. We are simply incompetent to go back beyond the beginning of motion or of the laws which produce motion; and as to such subtleties in general I apply to them what seems to me to be more nearly true than most proverbs:—*Quand celui qui parle n'entend rien, et celui qui écoute n'entend plus, alors c'est métaphysique.*”

“As you know,” returned Sterne, “I think your con-

tempt and dislike of metaphysics very ill-founded. But I would suggest to you another objection to your inference of a Creator from what you call 'creation' and I might call development. The actual Cosmos is but one out of an infinite number of conceivable or inconceivable but nevertheless possible arrangements. The laws by which it has been produced are very simple. Why need we assume design or a designer at all? Why should it not be possible that accident has produced the particular arrangement which exists; among some millions more or less of arrangements that might have occurred, and some one of which probably must have occurred? Take your own presumption, that at a given period the universe was a great disorganized inert nebula. Either it must have remained such or it must have gone through some process of change, assumed some sort of definite form, through the agency of one or more forces. I can see no reason why it should necessarily remain in its original chaos for ever. Grant change, force, motion—and these may for aught we know have been generated within itself—at once arises, for aught we know, and indefinite possibility of development: a chance that the original nebula might assume any one of some millions of forms. If it must needs assume some one among these why should not the actual one be mere matter of chance?"

"In the first place," said Cleveland, "I object entirely to your statement that the original motive power might have been generated in the inert mass itself. Inertia cannot generate force, nor can matter without forces already acting on it give birth to motion or undergo change of any kind. Secondly, chance

could hardly produce throughout an enormous mass millions of bodies all pursuing fixed courses which never interfere with one another, under laws apparently similar in all cases. Briefly, I can conceive chance giving us a chaos of any one shape rather than another, perhaps conceive chance reducing a Cosmos into chaos; but I doubt if any human imagination can really conceive that chance could produce a Cosmos out of chaos."

"Not directly," replied Sterne. "Of course it is plain that the Cosmos is governed, and has in all likelihood been reduced to order, not by chance but by law. What I meant to say was this; that considering the extreme simplicity of the laws actually operating (and I believe that men of science are now inclined to suspect that all laws and all forces will ultimately prove reducible to one law and one force) it may be possible that chance imposed law and gave motion out of which the actual Cosmos has resulted."

"I think," said Vere, "that you turn the argument upside down. The simpler the machinery by which results of admitted greatness and magnificence—perfect order throughout a system embracing millions of members—are attained, the clearer and more striking the evidence of organizing intellect. In human mechanics we esteem most highly the man who produces the greatest and most complicated effects by the simplest means; not him who attains his object by a complication of means proportionate to the grandeur and multiplicity of the effects. We move in invention sometimes from the complicated to the simple, sometimes from the simple to the

complicated; but in the latter case it is always to attain new and greater results that we increase the complexity of our machinery. Given the result, the highest task of intellect is to attain it by the simplest methods."

"Granted," said Sterne. "But I deny that we have any right to infer design from order merely because we ourselves can only produce order by design. Our own peculiar nature, as intelligent will-possessing agents, naturally induces us to infer Intelligence and Will from any result at all resembling those which we produce by Will through Intelligence; and there is some such resemblance between the Cosmos and the finest results of human invention. But the naturalness of the inference does not prove its justice. I must turn against its inventors the favourite Christian illustration of the vanity of scepticism:—that Man is but the fly perched on some little cog in a vast body of machinery, inferring from that tiny fragment the character of a whole manufactory-ful of complicated mechanism. We know that we produce orderly effects in a particular way and by certain means. But we are only the inhabitants of one out of millions upon millions of worlds. What right have we to infer from our own single experience what may be the case in other worlds and other systems? Still more may I say, what right have we to infer from our own little experience in this tiny fragment of the vast Cosmos the nature of the agencies by which the Cosmos as a whole was achieved?"

"Perhaps," said Vere, "Cleveland's argument is not so strictly demonstrative as it seems to me cogent and

convincing. Complicated order not produced by Intelligence may not be demonstrably impossible, but it is to us inconceivable. Cleveland may be wrong in thinking that his argument *proves* a Creator in the sense in which we say that Euclid's reasoning proves that two circles can only touch each other in one point. But I think he has proved that *human reason* can assign no other origin to the universe than the will of a supreme personal Intelligence. In short, if we are to think on the subject at all, we must think of a personal Creator. Impersonal creation may be abstractedly possible; but it is humanly unthinkable."

"In truth," said Gerard, "we must all agree upon one point. We can know only what is or is not thinkable by intelligence resembling our own. We cannot logically and certainly infer that the unthinkable is the impossible; because the conditions that limit our own thought may be applicable only to intelligence like our own. There *may* be Intelligence not like our own. There *may*, again, be Powers not intelligent, yet working out what we call a systematic scheme under some law of which we can have no conception. At the same time for practical human purposes the unthinkable *is* the impossible. We are compelled by the law of our own nature to disbelieve that which we cannot conceive: therefore if Cleveland have, as I am inclined to think, reduced Sterne to admit that a Cosmos developed out of chaos within a finite time by other than a personal intelligent creative power involves conclusions unthinkable by man, he has carried the argument as far as human reason can carry it; nay, *has* proved the truth of his doctrine as perfectly as Euclid has proved

anything. We can no more think an impersonal intelligence than we can think a right-angled triangle in which the square of the hypotenuse shall not be equal to the squares of the two other sides."

"At least," said Sterne, "you must admit that the Design argument, if it have any force at all, holds good only in the form wherein, and to the extent to which, you have applied it. Darwin has shown that adaptation does not prove design."

"How so?" said Dalway.

"Because," answered Sterne, "he has shown, or rather perhaps has caused us for the first time clearly to recognize, that adaptation is an absolute condition of existence. Thousands of unadapted forms may have striven to exist for every one adapted form that has come into being and endured; for only that which was adapted to the general order of the world around it could survive."

"I have always regretted," said Vere, "to notice the hostile attitude which nearly all my clerical brethren and the great majority of Christian controversialists have assumed towards the theory of Evolution as a whole. There is indeed one part of that theory, as (by implication at least) presented by its author, which is absolutely incompatible with Christianity, or with any form of religion; I mean the apparent assumption, running through the whole of Darwin's own writings and through those of the great majority of his supporters, that variations have been 'accidental;' not directed by law towards the fulfilment of a definite preconceived purpose."

"I think," interposed Cleveland, "that you should

make an exception in favour of Wallace, who is quite as well entitled as Darwin himself to the credit of the discoveries on which the doctrine of Evolution is founded, and who might equally claim the authorship of the doctrine itself. He has made certain reservations which seem to me to suggest that he, at least in the case of Man, recognizes a directing hand working through Evolution and Natural Selection to a distinct end."

"I did not," replied Vere, "notice such a difference between Wallace and the other Evolutionists; but then I have not read Wallace's later remarks on the evolution of Man, in which, as I am informed, he strives to show that man could not have been produced from an anthropoid ape by that kind of small variations seized upon and turned to account by Natural Selection, of which Darwin makes such extensive and exclusive use.*

* Mr. Wallace's points are, roughly stated, these :

1. That the brain of the lowest savage is nearly as large (8:9) as that of the highest European race; whereas the actual use made of it in savage life is very small indeed compared with the mental exercise of which civilized man has daily need. The Australian or Fuegian hardly requires much more brain than the orang-outang or gorilla—hardly achieves much more than the latter. Yet the brain of the lowest man is to that of the highest ape as, say $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 3. Now Natural Selection cannot improve an organ beyond the immediate need for its exercise; cannot give what is not wanted. Nature, acting without guidance, (without contemplation of a higher indefinitely distant purpose of perfection such as implies a directive Intelligence), could not give primitive Man a brain disproportionate to his primitive needs. Put in figures the argument would run briefly thus—

a. Savage brain : civilized brain :: 8 : 9 : brute brain :: $7\frac{1}{2}$: 3

b. Savage need or use of brain : civilized :: 4 : 9 : brute :: 4 : 3.

Evolution must have made the two series of proportions (a and b) identical.

2. That the loss of hair on the back is one of the oldest because most universal distinctions of humanity. Yet, even in Tropical climates, this must have been a disadvantage. The hair of the ape is a great protection for which savages try to find substitutes. Natural Selection would have increased and not removed it.

What I meant however, generally, was this. It is just as easy and just as satisfactory, from the standpoint of Theism, to suppose that the Creator created by law from the beginning, as to suppose that He worked a miracle at first which it has never been necessary to repeat—easier than to think that He has worked a number of miracles at each geological revolution. From the first moment when I fully understood the general purport of the theory of Evolution I was inclined to regard it as indicating (errors apart) the most probable, the most consistent, and the most beautiful explanation of the Creator's scheme and method of operation. To suppose—as is apparently implied by the first chapters of Genesis if taken in a strict and literal sense—that the Almighty produced the world at once, in something like its present shape, out of nothing, had always seemed to me unreasonable; even had not the idea been clearly inconsistent with the geological record. Such is not, so far as we can discern it, the Divine method. It is easy to imagine violent convulsions at certain stages—not frequent interruption of those slowly working laws which we trace throughout animate and inanimate Nature. Astronomers tell us that if their last views be sound the stars, star systems, planetary systems, have been created gradually through the operation of natural forces. Geologists tell us that our world was probably once a red-hot glowing globe; if it were not, at some yet more distant period, a sphere of still hotter vapour extending at least to the present orbit of the moon. We see, or think we

3. The earlier steps towards the formation of the savage foot in lieu of the ape's prehensile hind paw must have involved pure unmixed disadvantage. Natural Selection can only preserve variations immediately advantageous to the variant.

see, the Creator working out the present shape, crust, vegetation, animal life of this planet [to confine ourselves to the earth] by natural forces, in that very gradual manner so impossible to the impatience of short-lived mortals, but so evidently congenial to the mind which is *patiens quia æternus*. It seems therefore incongruous and inconsistent to suppose that He suddenly and by a pure effort of will superseded the action of all intermediate agencies and known physical forces, and filled earth, air, and sea with life such as we see it at present. It is infinitely more accordant with all we know of His methods—perhaps with what we ought to have inferred from His omnipotence and His eternity—to conceive that He worked out the present innumerable variety of species as He has worked out everything else. We know moreover that there must have been an age, nay, a long series of ages, during which man was not a denizen of this earth; and yet earth, sea, and air were filled as now with active joyous life. I could never see any reason for regarding Evolution with the same kind of angry frightened hostility that was shown by our predecessors towards each successive advance of science; from the first appearance of the Copernican theory of the Universe down to the last discoveries of geology. I suppose, however, that the aspect of Evolution which really disturbed the orthodox mind was a more or less conscious inference that, if Man had been developed out of some anthropoid ape, it was impossible to see at what point he could have become an immortal being. Yet this difficulty after all only applies to the race at large the puzzle so constantly urged upon us as regards the individual. We cannot guess at what moment the

individual man becomes a living soul. It is barely possible to suppose that a full-grown soul is introduced into the unconscious embryo when first the maternal sensations acknowledge the presence of a second life within. I believe that doctors consider that no real change then takes place even in the physical character of the *ovum*—that it is no more alive then than it was before. It is almost equally difficult to believe that the soul is introduced at the moment when the infant draws its first breath; since such a supposition, as has been pointed out by more than one thoughtful observer and by some earnest Christians, involves the assumption that 'it depends on a maternal movement or a clumsy midwife whether the infant shall be an immortal being or a senseless clod.' Take the Darwinian hypothesis at its worst, and it only presents to us the same puzzle in regard to mankind at large. Of course, if Mr. Darwin or any of his adherents could *prove* that our species had been developed from another by a series of infinitely small steps preserved by Natural Selection out of an infinite number of variations tending in all directions equally, they would render the interposition of directive Intelligence less essential. But this is precisely what they have failed to prove as regards species in general, and this is the weak point of their whole hypothesis. The links are missing *everywhere*. Now it is easy enough to believe that, from the imperfection of the geological record, we should have only one or two complete series, that all the others would be broken into fragments, and but one or two out of a thousand infinitesimal links, in most cases of development, presented to us. The truth, however, is that we have not a single

series such as Darwin supposes; nay, that we have not even the fragments of any such series. The utmost that the Evolutionists have found is a form remotely intermediate here and there between some families confessedly related as between the pig and the horse types; but I am not aware that the geological record has anywhere given them, for example, anything truly intermediate between the ass and the horse, or even between the zebra and the quagga."

"You press your argument too far," interposed Cleveland. "The links that trace the pedigree of the entire horse genus, for example, up to a little ungulate no bigger than a fox are, according to the last geological reports, clear enough and frequent enough to be indubitable."

"Ay, but," rejoined Vere, "they are not continuous. They prove Evolution, but not Darwinism—creation by birth, not development by an infinite series of infinitesimal accidents. These discoveries do not militate in the least against what seems to me, even on Darwin's own facts, the far more probable assumption of a law directing variation by defined steps in definite directions. Moreover, the same set of discoveries indicate that creatures more powerful and more highly organized than their highest successors have died out, and left behind only inferior forms of the same type—as the jaguar has superseded the machoerodus, as all the mighty reptiles have dwindled into insignificant representations. Now a process of degeneration among the *carnivora* would be fatal to the idea of chance variations only preserved when favourable to the varying species: it accords perfectly

with the hypothesis that all variation has been part of one plan, whereof the preparation of Earth for human habitation seems to have been the main end and culminating result. The terrific primeval monsters would have extirpated the non-arboreal *primates* before Man could be born. Again, no instance is given in which half-a-dozen Darwinian links hang together. The species most closely related are, on his theory, hundreds of links apart—and each link probably represents scores of generations. If we are to be guided not by doubtful analogies but by ascertained facts, we must suppose that the variations—instead of being infinitely numerous in all directions and infinitely small—were considerable and comparatively rare; and that they were from the first directed upwards in the scale of development. Even those variations among domestic animals to which Darwin appeals are apt, when closely examined in the light he himself is careful to furnish, to tell against him: very great variations have occurred very suddenly, and have been preserved by human selection for human convenience. But, again, there is a conclusive objection to all close and peremptory reasoning from domesticated to wild animals in respect of accumulated variation. Take the case of a variation which has already occurred, and which man desires to preserve, such as that of the ancon sheep. It can only be saved from speedy extinction by the most careful management, generation after generation, of those animals which most clearly and strongly inherit it. Were the animals of a single flock left to breed at pleasure, even so striking a variation as this would

disappear in a very few years. Now wild animals do breed together without the slightest regard to variations not amounting to specific difference. Had the ancon sheep appeared in a state of nature, even supposing it adapted more closely than the ordinary sheep to surrounding conditions, since the ancons would have bred just as readily with the ordinary sheep as with their own kind, the mere force of inheritance would have extinguished the variety in a very short time. In order that a variety should be preserved, and rendered more and more different from the original form, it would be necessary that a number of creatures of the same species should have varied at once in the same way; and, I think, almost if not absolutely necessary that the varying creatures should have shown a disposition to prefer one another as mates. The tendency of interbreeding to extinguish variety is mere matter of arithmetic, so obvious that the blot was soon hit and frankly acknowledged. Still, Darwin himself and his followers persist in reasoning as if Natural Selection must prevail over this certain and calculable resistant force, and never clearly explain how or why. Or if Darwin does explain it in the passage wherein he acknowledges his original oversight, I fail to understand in what way he means to modify his theory so as to meet the objection: and what perplexes me may equally perplex other readers. Darwin, indeed, insists very strongly on the probable inheritance of variations; but if any special heritability attaches to variations it must be in virtue of some peculiar law directly and specially tending (if not *intended*) to work out the development of species.

If left to the ordinary forces of inheritance every variation occurring at first in a single animal or in a very few out of a large number must clearly have been extirpated. The variant would have matched with a non-variant and, the forces of inheritance being equal on both sides, one-half the variation would disappear in the first generation, one-quarter alone would remain in the second, one-eighth in the third, and so on. If on the other hand there be—as it seems absolutely essential to Evolution that there should be—a special heritable force in varieties, so that offspring should tend to inherit the variation rather than the original form, this shows the existence of some special favour to variety which can scarcely be attributed to anything else than a law to that effect probably proceeding directly from Intelligent Power which intended from the first that variations should be preserved. Thus it seems to me that, when fairly and carefully viewed on all sides and in all its consequences, the Darwinian evidence itself in so far as we can accept it bears testimony to that intelligent Creative Will, that Superintending Providence which nearly all Darwinians apparently wish to exclude.”

“But,” observed Sterne, “Darwin accounts for the preservation of the variant creatures on the assumption that out of an infinite number of variations in all directions, those only have survived which have been specially adapted to surrounding conditions, and these of course Natural Selection would tend to preserve.”

“Granted,” said Cleveland. “But this only and at most establishes, what Vere would not deny, that there would be a sort of struggle between Natural Selection

and the force of inheritance. Now—if variation give no prepotence in shaping the offspring—it seems quite clear that, admitting the premises of the Evolutionists, the force of inheritance would beat Natural Selection out of the field, except under the most extraordinary and exceptional circumstances. Mind, it is *alleged* that the variations are very small, so as to give but a very slight or trivial advantage in the struggle for existence. In each generation this advantage would be divided by one-half; so that before Natural Selection could effectively avail a number of variants too small to modify the average character, the variation would be extinguished. If one beast in ten thousand gain an advantage which gives it, say, a double chance of life—and this is apparently greater than Darwin admits—this advantage would in the course of four or five generations have been reduced below perceptibility. To render even the development of a race a little superior to its predecessors probable, you must have variation occurring at once in a fraction of the entire number large enough to *tell* almost at once—large enough to make them, after half-a-dozen generations of them had profited by their slightly-increased percentage of survivals, a very considerable proportion of the entire body of the species existing in a given region at the end of that time. This would imply variation by law, simultaneous variation of many individuals, such as Darwin has not yet, if I rightly apprehend the language of his later editions, admitted within the scope of his theory. In one word, accidental individual variations would under the theory of probabilities—which is always true on the large scale—be extirpated by the forces of inheritance before

Natural Selection could act. To render even race-evolution—the production not of a new species but of a distinct breed—possible you must have one or more of three conditions:—prepotence in heredity, numerous variant individuals varying in the same direction at the same time—which surely requires both proof and explanation—or such extensive extirpation and such favour to the variety as would render the few variant descendants of the original variant a large proportion of the entire number of survivors. Considering the enormous numbers of most species, and the very slight amount of supposed variance, the latter hypothesis cannot be admitted; and to allow either of the others is to allow a special law introduced in favour of upward variation: that is to say, strong evidence of *design* to create by evolution.”

“But,” said Gerard, “Darwin does I think admit and even assert, though not perhaps so plainly as to make his meaning quite unquestionable, the prepotence of variants in heredity.”

“I have,” said Cleveland, “studied that point in his writings over and over again, and I can never make out what he does affirm. Considering his great reputation and the general lucidity of his statements, I must suppose that my failure to apprehend his meaning on this point is due to my default and not to his. But while he constantly and repeatedly insists on the power of inheritance to preserve variations, he nowhere explains how he supposes it to act. It is obvious that the mere general force of inheritance would operate as I have said to preserve the average specific character—that is, to extinguish variation; yet Darwin always

assumes that it does act to preserve varieties, and there is certainly some reason to think that he is right. It still seems an irrefragable inference that inheritance can only preserve variations if variations give prepotence in heredity; and that it does give such prepotence I can nowhere find stated in Darwin's writings."

"Whether stated or not," said Gerard, "I think it is pretty clear that at least in many cases that prepotence does exist."

"Certainly," said Cleveland, "if we admit, as I suppose that nearly all of us do, that Evolution has probably been the method of Creation, we must suppose that such prepotence exists: otherwise variations could hardly have been preserved, to the extent which that belief requires, and which facts seem to prove. But the existence of such a prepotence is fatal to that accidental undesigned character which is after all the point of dispute—the doctrine which enlists the feelings of unbelievers in favour of Evolution and excites those of believers against it."

"Why so?" said Sterne. "Why should the existence of a law favouring Evolution prove design any more than the general law of inheritance?"

"Because," said Cleveland, "the greater the number of what I may call exceptional laws, the stronger the evidence in favour of some immediately-acting intelligence which has superimposed those exceptions on the general scheme. The case of the Materialists and Atheists rests mainly on the idea that a few simple laws, such as chance might have imposed, account for everything. If we can show two or three reversals of these general laws, which, being reversals, could not

have been produced by the general laws themselves, we sap the foundations of Materialism. Now the very nature of the reproductive system throughout the vegetable and animal worlds is such as to render the general law of inheritance its obvious and apparently necessary consequence. It would be strange indeed if children did not resemble the parents from whom they have received life and embryonic nourishment. But that they should resemble one parent rather than the other, (unless indeed viviparous offspring always resembled the mother solely or chiefly) would be a perplexity. That they should resemble generally neither mother nor father, but simply that parent which is least like the rest of the species, is utterly unaccountable, except on the hypothesis of a law favouring variation, which could not have originated in the general law it contradicts. The case is closely analogous to that strange exception in the case of water to the general law that density increases with cold, upon which exception the existence of temperate climates and the possibility of life depend. There is a general, and so far as I know universal, law that every liquid becomes denser—more compressed, and therefore mass for mass heavier—as its temperature diminishes towards the point of solidification. This would be I presume a necessary consequence of that which now seems to be almost established as a fact, that heat is a form of molecular motion. Of course the less the motion (implying a certain mutual distance) among the molecules of a particular liquid mass the less the force keeping them apart; the greater would be the liability to compression by the weight of the similar liquid around,

by that of the air, and by the mutual gravitation of the particles. We should assume as a necessary part of this law that water would grow denser as it grew colder, until actual solidification began; when the peculiar structure of ice—with its infinite number of crossing spiculæ and the quantity of air or hollow space enclosed in its mass—would of course render it lighter than water at even a very high temperature. But were this the case, did the universal law that density in liquids is inversely proportional to heat hold good of water down to the point of freezing, no life could exist in any body of water liable to freeze; and almost certainly no life could exist on earth. Each stratum of water as it cooled would sink, so that before freezing began the whole body of water must be reduced to 32° Fahr.; then the whole mass would freeze almost instantaneously, beginning at the bottom. Such congelation of the entire mass of seas, lakes, and even rivers, under sharp and prolonged frost would render the greater part of the temperate zones uninhabitable, and would probably so affect the general temperature of the earth's surface that even the torrid zone would be rendered too cold for life. This is prevented as we all know by an extraordinary and apparently unparalleled interference with the general law. Through this interference water reaches its greatest density at about 39° Fahr., in consequence whereof the water colder than this floats at the top, and freezing there prevents the lower strata of water from parting with their surplus warmth to the freezing air, because ice is an exceedingly bad conductor of heat. Here you have, as in the supposed case of heritable prepotence in varia-

tion, a direct reversal of a general rule, which reversal cannot be traced to the operation of any other general law. In the one instance the exception is essential to the existence of life; in the other it seems essential to the method of creation which we have every reason to assume was actually employed in the development of animal and vegetable species. Such unaccountable exceptions, introduced exactly where they are essential to the highest class of ultimate creative results, surely force upon an impartial and thoughtful mind the conviction that those results are *not* the work of chance; that they were foreseen from the first, and their accomplishment from the first provided for by an Intelligent Will which we cannot but regard as personal."

"I am not sure," rejoined Sterne, "that the exception, any more than the general rule, proves intelligent direction. Grant that the two interferences or reversals, as you call them, were necessary to the particular results that have been attained or have taken place; their absence might have been compatible with other results equally satisfactory in which other beings might have seen just as strong or as weak evidence of Creative foresight as you discern in the actual adaptation of things."

"Of course," returned Cleveland, "neither Vere nor I expect to convert in the course of an evening's conversation a man like you; who had begun to study the theological aspect of these questions when we were boys at school, and has never since ceased to study them. I do think, however, that when you come to reconsider this matter, you will see that the two points I have mentioned are very telling arguments in the general

controversy between us. It does not follow that you should think them conclusive; but I shall be surprised if you persist in thinking that the existence of exceptional laws very narrowly limited in the midst of a scheme of very simple and almost always absolute laws, is not a grave argument in favour of an intelligent Law-giver; or that the absolute necessity of such laws to the existence of the present and past life of the earth in its infinite forms does not *prima facie* indicate, though it may fail to demonstrate, the origin of the actual state of things in the design of a Creator who, ages on ages before life existed upon this earth, had not merely foreseen and intended, but carefully provided and prepared for its ultimate existence and variety."

"I should add," said Vere, "that we can find in geological history proof, or at least strong presumption of similar foresight of and preparation for the culmination of terrestrial life in man, and even in civilized man. The world was through countless ages prepared first for the advent of humanity, secondly, for its development into the present exalted intelligent being and life of the Aryan race. Geology tells us that at first even the lower forms of terrestrial animal life were developed into a power, size, and destructive force incompatible with the safety of a creature so weak as the human savage. Before mammals appeared at all, the reptile kingdom had reached in its highest forms a terrible if clumsy grandeur. The great saurians seem to have been more powerful and formidable beings than any now existing. Though of a lower character, they must have been capable of destroying the lion or the tiger as easily as these could destroy a Hottentot or a Tasmanian.

These creatures were lords of earth and ocean for an indefinite period; but they were swept away so completely that there remains nothing in the now living world to represent them save a few forms of which almost all are harmless and very small—lizards, tortoises, and the like. Then came the lower and then the higher mammals; and some at least of the most formidable among these, if not the cave-tiger or the mammoth, were probably extinct before man had so spread over the earth as to come in collision with them, save at a few isolated points. There seems every reason to believe that the first human or semi-human families must have been developed or come into being in regions where they were somehow protected from creatures with which at that time they could not possibly have coped.”

“And,” observed Cleveland, “Wallace rightly points out that most of the changes which have according to the Darwinian theory distinguished Man from the anthropoid apes would be at first causes of weakness, disadvantages in the struggle for existence. Man’s denudation of the hairy covering possessed by the apes must have been a terrible disadvantage. Grant, as I believe, that the first men probably inhabited an isolated oceanic continent, like Australia, in which the gorilla or some similar creature would be their most formidable competitor; from which the mightier beasts of prey were excluded by wide stretches of ocean, and which was situated within the tropics. Yet even here the absence of hair alone must have tended to the destruction of the new variety, not because they needed the warmth it gave but because

in such regions the rains are heavy and endure for weeks at a time. Now we are told that the hair of the anthropoids is so arranged as to throw off the moisture against which hairless man would be defenceless. The loss of prehensile power in the foot must have been another very grave disadvantage, ill compensated by a power to walk erect which, if slowly developed, must at first have placed man for a long period on a lower level of defensive and offensive strength, rendered him slower and feebler than those powerful anthropoid apes among whom we are to seek his supposed ancestors. Only in case the brain underwent a very rapid development, compensating these losses—inconsistent with that minute variation which is one of the two dogmas in dispute—could the change from the ape to the human savage have been favoured or even tolerated by Natural Selection. And an Anthropoid with such a brain, preserving also the hair and the prehensile foot, would have prevailed over Man. Again, primitive Man could not have risen above the lowest state of almost bestial savagery or coped with powerful beasts till he had developed at least the power of shaping as well as of using missile weapons; and this involves a superiority over the Apes slight in fact, but enormous in comparison with Darwin's infinitesimal steps—one which according to Evolutionists it would take centuries of centuries to accomplish. If that step was not made *per saltum* Man would have perished before he was really born as Man, if only by his inferiority to the one animal order which could have given birth to him. Indeed, I doubt whether the lowest savages are, in power of survival, the equals of the gorilla. Such a sudden leap,

apparently involving several simultaneous changes, cannot be admitted without shaking to its foundations that doctrine of gradual imperceptible evolution on which Materialism is now resting its entire edifice of incredulity. Before Man could have become a hunter—and his existence must have been utterly precarious, if it were possible, till he became at least a hunter—he must have been raised so high above his ape-ancestors as to be able not merely to invent something like the bow or the boomerang, but to shape them with flint tools. The extreme difficulty of making these tools themselves effective, and of working out with them anything that could render him master even of a fauna from which the *carnivora* were excluded, implies an intelligence and a mental skill very decidedly superior to any which our ablest training could develop in the largest-brained ape. It is remarkable, again, that this supreme step or leap was taken from a standpoint by no means the highest in the animal world; the elephant and the dog being apparently much wiser and more teachable than the highest apes. It is difficult then to comprehend the development even of the hunting savage without calling in a creative direction and an extraordinary combination of rapid change with favouring and protecting circumstances such as almost amounts to a miracle. But, again, man must have remained a hunter, and a hunter unaided by dogs, unless the animal world had been prepared before-hand to help him. To the second step in human existence, the first step in civilization, tameable animals were necessary; and we find accordingly that before man appeared on the earth the sheep and

the cow had been developed for his food in the second stage of his progress: the horse, the ass, the camel, the elephant, placed at his disposal as beasts of burden; the wild ancestors of the dog prepared to assist him in the chase and to guard his home and flocks, and endowed with a docility rare, exceedingly rare, among animals generally. He must have been endowed almost from the first with a power, attractive and dominating, which distinguishes him from all other creatures, and renders him even in his lowest known condition lord of all around him. Here we have an adaptation directly conflicting with Darwin's strongest and most emphatically asserted tenet; viz.—that no instinct or quality is given to one animal for the benefit of another. I think myself that the relations between the aphis and the ant which milks it conflict with this tenet. But with that loyal frankness which always characterizes his reasoning Darwin himself has pointed out that variation and Natural Selection could not possibly have adapted one animal to the use of another as so many animals have been in my view adapted beforehand to the use of Man. If, then, there are signs of an adaptation of the animal world to the use of Man, if certain creatures were endowed with a capacity for domestication—a docility and comparative gentleness—useless to them in their wild state but very useful to him—if whole families were reduced to their lowest forms in order to make room for him—then, according to Mr. Darwin himself, the theory of Evolution breaks down. I should not say that it breaks down, but only that it requires to be modified and supplemented by

the admission of the conditions most repugnant to many of its votaries—a law or plan embracing the life of earth as a whole, dealing with all living forms and all ages, governing alike the production and preservation of varieties not casual and self-centred, but all tending to combine in one harmonious whole; a directing Intelligence working through such a law towards foreseen and adequate results; and making every modification of every living form conduce in its time and place to the realization of one definite purpose—the culmination of Life in the intellectual capacities, the practical powers, the conscious free-will, the moral responsibility, the marvellous destinies and limitless aspirations of Man. Again, the vast material advance, the enlargement of human power, characteristic of our own age, would hardly have been possible without coal, and would have been very difficult if coal and iron had not been placed so frequently in close proximity to one another. If, then, coal was in any sense meant for man's use, ages on ages, change upon change were employed in preparing for human civilization. Forest growths went on for centuries; vast wooded areas were submerged, raised, submerged again; and this process was repeated in a hundred distant places, and often in each place a score of times, thousands of centuries before the first man appeared on earth, in order that the civilized man of this age and of future ages might be possible. If any one of these favouring circumstances stood alone we might fairly regard it as an accident. But that mere chance or coincidence should have accumulated such a combination of favouring

circumstances through so long and complicated a process for the benefit of a single one of the innumerable animal species that live or have lived upon the earth, no one who has studied the theory of probabilities will, I think, be disposed to believe. I would add then to my essential qualification of the Darwinian theory—Intelligent direction—two signal exceptions; implying—not a miracle, in the sense in which we employ the word as signifying a palpable interruption or violation of natural laws but—a Providential direction and combination of results attained by and through those laws into the form of a preconceived design; a design only intelligible or articulate when, all its parts furnished and fitted to their place, the crowning flower of all appeared. Man must have been developed by a special process, because at this point a being dependent on body had to produce one dependent on brain, and until the latter dependence was fully provided for, the weakness of the body might be fatal; hence a necessity for wider and swifter steps than Evolutionists are willing to allow. And further, both the inanimate and animate worlds were, contrary to the theory of the Materialists, specially and curiously adapted to the needs of man ages before he appeared on earth; and to human civilization while Man, according to the Evolutionist, was, and was destined still to be for countless centuries, a mere savage or barbarian.”

“As a matter of evidence, however,” said Vere, “we trace no signs of a general barbarism enduring for ages before the earliest civilization. The earliest traces of man yet discovered are of civilized or semi-civilized

communities; and where barbarism prevailed during the historic period, as well as under the remains of historic empires, we find the ruins of civilizations older than the oldest traditions of their local successors; older, perhaps, than the oldest existing savagery."

"There is," continued Cleveland, "another point on which I have always been disposed to distrust or dispute the Darwinian system. Its author declares that the infinite and varied beauty of nature was nowise intended for human gratification; that the bright colours of the flowers, the exquisite shape and painting of insects, the bright hues of birds, were all intended exclusively for the advantage of the species themselves. The bright-coloured flowers, for instance, only acquired that colour in order to attract insects by which they might be fertilized. But one large blotch of bright colour would have accomplished this end just as certainly as those exquisite varieties of tint and brilliance, those wonderfully perfect and as wonderfully different outlines, those marvellous combinations and arrangements of varied and harmonized shades and hues, which render flowers so delightful to human sense. If intended merely to attract the insects by which they are fertilized, the flowers afford incomparably the most striking instance of lavish, I might almost say of wasted, endowments whereof Nature affords so many examples. Once admit that they were intended to gratify the intelligent perceptions of Man, or that beauty is in the Creator's mind an end in itself, and we can understand why flowers have been rendered not merely bright but exquisitely beautiful in form as well as in arrangement and variety of colour. The Darwinian theory accounts for the white

or purple convolvulus; it utterly fails to explain that perfection of shape, that delicacy of texture, which render the convolvulus one of the most microscopically perfect and signally beautiful of natural objects. And the same may be said of every flower in which more colours than one are blended, and of every flower in which the arrangement of the colours adds greatly to their beauty though nothing to their singularity and conspicuity. So, again, of the song and the plumage of birds. The instinct of copulation is so strong that we can hardly suppose either one or the other necessary or even materially useful in winning mates: certainly it is difficult to suppose that the service they may have rendered in sexual selection at all compensates the extra peril to which they expose the creatures so distinguished. Thus, again, I ask for what purpose the Bird of Paradise was gifted with its marvellously beautiful but certainly very inconvenient mass of plumage? In one word, to minds confined within the Darwinian theory, most of the beauty of nature is unintelligible or explicable only by far-fetched and improbable subtleties; at best wasteful, often injurious. It is explained at once if we suppose a Creator who either delights in beauty Himself, or wished to gratify the senses, and through their gratification to elevate the character, of His noblest earthly creature. Surely the abundance of beauty is a powerful argument in favour of the religious theory which does explain—as against the Materialistic hypothesis which utterly fails to explain, nay, which conflicts with—one of the most striking and universal characteristics of the actual world.”

“Of course,” replied Sterne, “we cannot possibly tell

what pleasure beauty may give to the supposed Creator Himself or to beings to whose senses the beauties of earth may be perceptible, though the inhabitants of earth cannot in return perceive them. But as regards man I am inclined to doubt whether the delight found in natural beauty is not confined to a comparatively small proportion of the species, and these chiefly resident in countries where natural beauty is sparsely bestowed. The natives of those tropical lands in which the very wilderness and jungle surpass in verdure, and sometimes in splendid colouring, the beauty of the finest English gardens seem to care very little for, indeed scarcely to perceive, the splendours with which the Creative Power of your creed has strown the earth, the sea, and the air around them. Surely if an intelligent Creator had meant these beauties to gratify man, He would have placed them chiefly in the lands inhabited by the men most capable of enjoying them!"

"You forget," said Cleveland, "that the Creator is *patiens quia eternus*. One can hardly doubt that in time the finest, most fertile, most beautiful regions of the earth will be occupied by the races most capable of turning them to account and of enjoying the loveliness of their scenery and the geniality of their climate. As to the other point you have rather implied than expressed—the limited number of those even among the highest races who really derive much pleasure from natural beauty—it admits of a double answer. In the first place, it is quite evident that the Creator thinks not only of the greatest number but of the greatest happiness. He has ordained that myriads of inferior creatures shall minister to the pleasure or to the life of

one superior; and it is quite in accord with our experience of His methods that millions of men of comparatively low nervous organization should pass a life enjoyable within their power of enjoyment, but still poor and mean, in order that one life of a higher kind might be filled with all the delight and raised to the highest perfection of which it is capable. Secondly, enjoyment of natural beauty is in great measure a question of education; and education spreads, and will spread more and more rapidly, generation after generation, among the higher races of mankind, till within a century or two every individual man and woman in every Aryan nation will be as thoroughly educated as those who receive the best education of the present day."

"I daresay," said Sterne, "that Darwin's views will in the course of a few years need qualification and addition, even greater than they have received already at his own hands. But I certainly do not see in your few, and therefore to me very dubious, instances of what you are pleased to consider preparation or adaptation of the lower and previous world to human uses, anything likely to enforce so fundamental a modification of the Evolutionary system as that involved in the introduction of a personal Creator and a deliberate direction of variation in an upward course. Still less can I suppose that the mere excess of beauty in nature, over and above what you admit to be necessary for practical purposes, can furnish foundation for the tremendous inference you would rest upon it. You must remember that our sense of beauty is in great measure a sense of adaptation; the forms, hues, and

arrangements you so greatly admire have in some cases known and obvious uses, while in others it is only reasonable to suppose that uses not yet known may be hereafter ascertained. Then again as to shape, we admire chiefly certain defined geometrical forms; and it is at least probable that these forms are not produced for the sake of their beauty, but are simply those natural in each instance to the species and traceable to its laws of growth. In short, much of what you call beauty may be an accident of law. Much of it, also, is certainly or almost certainly the result of this obvious but often forgotten fact—that man, and man's senses, are adapted to the world as it is; that he is himself a part of that system whose other parts he admires. It is just conceivable that to a being of different nature from a different world not a little of what we call beauty might appear as supreme ugliness. Again, colour has no real existence; it is merely an impression produced on the eye by certain reflections of light, and depends therefore for its power of causing pleasure on the simple fact that the eye, whether of man or of insects, has been necessarily by the very force of evolution adapted to light in all its forms, of which colour is one."

"The eye itself," answered Cleveland, "is one of the most extraordinary marvels of creation, and one of those least easily accounted for by Evolution. It is perfectly easy to explain on the Darwinian hypothesis how a simple membrane, at first feebly sensitive to light, should have gradually been developed to a much higher degree of sensitiveness; as, for example, the

dog's sense of smell has been, probably long before he became a dog in the modern sense, developed to a degree of power simply incomprehensible to ourselves. But what is not easy, what is scarcely conceivable, on mere principles of Evolution—what can hardly be accounted for by accidental variations favoured by Natural Selection—is the combination of a multitude of independent variations into one marvellously perfect organ. It is essential to the Evolutionary explanation that each single step should have been distinctly beneficial. In the case of a complicated organ produced by the very gradual modification of several different parts, simultaneously if you will but separately, this explanation breaks down. The separate modifications supposed would have been useless: even if simultaneous, their smallness, as assumed by Evolutionists, would have rendered them severally too insignificant to have been preserved by Natural Selection; and the simultaneous variation of many different and independent parts to form ultimately one perfect organ—perfect as yet perhaps only in an approximate sense—would of itself imply directive Intelligence working to a remote end by gradual changes not in themselves immediately useful. Unfortunately, I am not possessed of the anatomical knowledge which would enable me to apply this obvious truth to the structure of the eye in its wonderful detail; but what I have read on the subject has strongly impressed upon my mind the idea that the enormous difference between the eye of the mammal as it now exists and the rude semi-sensitive membrane in which Evolution sees its origin, has been

accomplished by the development of several parts, no one of which would have been of great use by itself, but which in their joint result have given us the wonderful organ through which the most valuable of our senses operates."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HAND ON THE HELM.

THE weather, which had confined us to the house, having cleared after noon, and the bright green lawn and trees already showing the varied tints of autumn inviting us forth, we joined Mrs. Cleveland and Mrs. Dalway, who were before us on the terrace. They took, however, no part in the following conversation, and some previously arranged drive speedily called them away.

“I have been much struck,” said Gerard, “by the reasoning of a work to which Cleveland first called my attention—Mr. Bagehot’s ‘Physics and Politics.’ It so clearly works out the Evolutionary scheme as applied to pre-historic human history—if I may use such a phrase—that not only does it leave on my mind a fixed impression of the complete validity of the argument so far as it is carried, but, like most really deep and thoughtful reasonings, suggests corollaries and inferences that prolong the line of its logic both backward and onward. Till I read it, I had been inclined to accept the doctrine on which Cleveland lays so much stress, that Providential government is clearly to be traced in human history as well as in individual lives. But, though there are chapters, and long ones, of history to

which that doctrine still seems to afford the best and the only connected clue, I am often forced to feel that Bagehot has done for it what the Origin of Species did for the Biblical Cosmogony—doomed if not destroyed it.”

“Before passing to the general question of Providential Government in history,” returned Vere, “I should like to appeal to the personal experience of individuals as to the lessons of their own life. Is it, or is it not, true that in proportion as after middle life we look back on our own career and fortunes with careful and unbiassed scrutiny, we find that Providence has been educating, rewarding, punishing us in our individual character; and this so distinctly that in many cases it seems impossible to resist the belief in a definite purpose applied to our lives, or worked out therein, by a wisdom superior to ours and a Power outside of ourselves? Of course, while our lives remain unfinished there must be many parts of the education and discipline we have undergone the purpose of which we fail to recognize, precisely because it *is* incomplete. But there are also parts of our life-story which are in some sense finished; and as a rule do we not find that we can trace in these not merely what is called poetic justice but actual application of events to correct our own special faults?”

“I cannot say,” rejoined Sterne, “that my experience would confirm your view. My whole life was saddened, my enjoyment of youth and health destroyed before I was five-and-twenty by the death of a child-sister—the only creature I loved. That loss certainly did me nothing but harm in regard to my own personal nature and inner character. It caused me to devote myself

much more resolutely and unflinchingly than I might otherwise have done to public objects; but then every one of those objects would appear to you, and probably to most of us here present, simply mischievous."

"No," said Vere, "not simply, perhaps not mainly mischievous, even according to our human lights. You have no doubt fought for twenty years against everything that seems to me most essential to human happiness here and hereafter. But I doubt whether you, or the party of which you were one of the most valued leaders, have really exercised any great influence upon religious opinion. In order to avoid all risk of personal offence I will apply my remarks rather to your acknowledged leader than to you. Mr. Holyoake and his supporters were twenty years ago the only influential teachers of avowed Atheism; but in teaching Atheism they made no way. Whatever progress Materialism, which involves practical Atheism, may have silently achieved in the last quarter of a century is due not to so-called Secularism but to misapplied science. On the other hand, the Secularists did one great and most useful work: they achieved the right of free speech not only for the study and the medical lecture-room but for the platform and for the press. They practically repealed the blasphemy laws. The 'Last Trial by Jury for Atheism,' as Mr. Holyoake called the account of his own persecution, was not the last. The last such trial was of a much baser character. A bitter Evangelical bigot, like the chief author of the attack on Mr. Holyoake, might fancy that he did his Church useful if not honourable service in using the missiles of the law to pelt a Socialist lecturer from the platform. But—while

thought and speech were left free in London lecture-halls, and placards wantonly offensive proclaimed in London streets the right of blasphemy—the spirit which, ignoring this public parade of defiance to an obsolete law, vented on a poor Cornish peasant the passions elsewhere curbed by prudence was no less unmanly than un-Christian. To sentence such a man to the punishment of a felon for writing ribaldry on a gate was something more and something worse than mistaken severity; to add cumulative terms of imprisonment one after another to the total amount of two years and a half for each angry phrase spoken to the constable who arrested him was a shameful abuse of the law. Notoriously this could not have been done in London or Lancashire; and Mr. Justice Coleridge should have known that he was giving judicial effect to his own personal feelings, not to the opinion of the Bench at large. The complicity of his son as prosecuting counsel in this proceeding should have shamed the latter from afterwards posing before the public as a champion of religious liberty. Pooley's case has, I hope and believe, made trials for blasphemy impossible in the future. But it never would have produced this result but for the energy and activity of Mr. Holyoake, which dragged the whole story of a petty case conducted at the Cornish Assizes into light, and brought the damaging facts to the knowledge of every reader of an English newspaper. Much of the effect on public feeling was also due to the promptitude with which your party at the same time challenged prosecution in London, and showed that the law so abused in the comparative secrecy of a petty provincial town could not be put in

force in the capital: that bigotry itself dared not trust the verdict of a London jury or bring the merits of its stolen victory to the test of law as interpreted by an impartial Judge under the watchful eyes of the Metropolitan press. Your leader and his adherents have, I believe, done little or nothing for Atheism. You have won a great victory for human liberty, especially for liberty of conscience; and in proportion to the intensity and confidence of my faith in the truth of Christianity is my gratitude to those enemies who secured for it the inestimable advantage of free discussion; who have made it impossible for themselves or any one else again to say that Christianity prevails only because the arguments of its supporters cannot be fully, fairly, equally challenged and answered in public, in the press, and on the platform. Even your own life, then, testifies, in my opinion, to the use that Providence can make of our human errors and our bitterest calamities to forward ends to which our shortsighted exertions may have been intentionally opposed."

"I agree," said Gerard, "with pretty nearly every word you have spoken in regard to the cause of free thought, and the service rendered thereto by Mr. Holyoake, by our friend here, and by one or two others of the same school. But I should take one or two exceptions to your remarks: your censure of the elder Coleridge is just to the letter if, as we both suppose, he used his power to give effect to his individual feelings in a sentence that would not have been passed in London: a sentence which would, I venture to think, have justified any Liberal in either House in moving an address to the Crown for his removal. But it was not

the son's business to prosecute London blasphemers, unless he were briefed and paid to do so. Secondly, whatever the advantage of free speech, I regret that Mr. Holyoake and the gentlemen who then supported him, like Sterne, withdrew from their leadership soon after legal freedom of speech was in effect secured, and left a very different class of men to represent their cause. Not from any sympathy for Christianity, but simply from contempt and loathing for the men, and for the insults utterly wanton and senseless which they lavish on ideas sacred in the opinion of half their countrymen, I could wish that the vulgar Atheists of the present day could be shamed if not coerced rather into decency than into silence."

"You cannot," rejoined Sterne, "fairly make us responsible for those whom you call our successors. They were never cordial or trustworthy allies of ours; and, as you seem to admit, our principal work was done when practical license of speech and thought was secured for all. Again, I must demur to the excuse you prefer for the younger Coleridge. His position as prosecuting counsel in a criminal case, where the accused was at once ignorant to helplessness and undefended, bound him not merely to abstain from taking unfair advantage, but to see that no unfair advantage was taken. Now, the multiplication of counts in the indictment—every one of which, except the first, was an oppressive misapplication of the law, referring to words spoken in anger and almost in private after arrest on the first charge—was just one of those perversions of law which a prosecuting counsel ought to have repudiated when the prisoner was undefended. And again,

it is impossible, remembering the relation between the Judge and the prosecutor, not to hold the son jointly responsible with the father."

"I should be glad," said Vere, "to know that the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas was not guilty of such political insincerity or of such professional misconduct as I had been led to impute to him. Till ardent conviction, generating theological hatred, led him into his one unpardonable fault, the late Judge Coleridge was with good reason respected by the bar and the public and honoured by earnest Churchmen; and I am therefore glad to hear anything that can be alleged in excuse for his son. As a true subject of the Queen, I am glad to hear any vindication of that purity of the judicial ermine whereof all loyal Englishmen are proud and jealous. But I only mentioned that case, and the skill and judgment by which it was made the field of a final victory in the cause of free speech, in answer to Sterne's implied assumption that I must regard the devotion of his life to Secularism as a misfortune, and consequently as anything but a probable indication of Providential guidance. I return to my point. Is it not true that the more closely and carefully we scrutinize our own past history and present character, the stronger and clearer become the indications of Providential guidance, instruction, correction which each of us finds in his own personal experience?"

"As I said just now, I was inclined to accept your doctrine," answered Gerard; "but I could not bear—even for a purpose like yours, whose value I appreciate and whose importance might fairly claim to override all personal resolves—to revert to the very few and very

painful experiences that have exercised a critical influence on my own life."

"And I," said Cleveland, "have been so happy, or at any rate so fortunate in the success that has hitherto attended my own attempt to shape out my life and career for myself, that I have probably on the ground of personal experience less to say in favour of your view than almost any other man could have. Providence has simply allowed me to work out thus far with perfect satisfaction to myself the scheme of life I sketched out before I was one-and-twenty. I could, however, support your view by reference to the experiences of many intimate friends; as I have no doubt that you, from your professional opportunities, were your lips not sealed by professional confidence, could do to a much larger extent. I have seen, for example, characters of dubious promise to all appearance strengthened, improved, I might almost say redeemed, through the consequences not merely of folly but of sin. I remember one instance of this sort, signally illustrating at once the overruling power of Providence and the inscrutability of its methods. Years ago I became acquainted with the character of one then in very early youth, for whom but a single human observer professed warm affection or confident hope. I must own that that one observer was so rarely wrong in instinctive appreciation that the exception almost outweighed the contrary judgment of the rest. Circumstances that seemed sure to consummate the moral mischief resulted, by the very greatness of the peril, in affording what appeared to all the one chance and the best possible opportunity of retrieval. But, some months later, my farsighted friend predicted the

failure of that promising experiment; and predicted it on grounds that seemed the most improbable—'the weakness of the strong and the follies of the wise.' In a few years more his mournful prophecy was fulfilled to the letter; fulfilled not only in an irrevocable blunder, but in a very serious fault. Again Providential wisdom baffled human foresight. Of the after-discipline I know nothing, save that it must have been severe; when Providence takes the rod in hand, He strikes hard and strikes home. But the significant lesson of the story is this: that the fault and the folly effected what nothing else had accomplished. Conscious responsibility for wilful error taught patient endurance and loyal acceptance of the consequences in a wholly new and nobler spirit; consciousness of wrong-doing enforced humble, penitent submission to its natural punishment. Sin as well as sorrow has borne its part in the redemption wherein one silent spectator at least believed through pain and fear, through innumerable disappointments, to the last. I could tell, again, of characters saved at critical junctures through what are generally thought the worst and most purely demoralizing of human trials and sufferings. I have again seen many a petulant, wilful, idle lad cured of faults that would have marred his whole career by the discipline of a life regarded as especially dangerous and full of temptations especially fatal to such tempers—the life of the garrison and the camp. Again, my own sacrifice in refusing to sign the Articles cost me nothing but a fellowship, which I did not greatly miss, and nowise affected my career. I had, however, a friend who refused—not like myself when he should have taken his degree but when he

should have matriculated. Not pretending to understand the general theology of the Church, and having no scruple in accepting it, at nineteen, on credit, he took exception to a single Article—that which asserts the theological truth of the three Creeds. It is curious that his refusal was founded in ignorance. He objected only to the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed, saying, 'I have nothing that deserves to be called a conviction on the theological question, except that I do distinctly disbelieve that my friends and kindred will be damned for not believing what, as I read it, nobody can understand.' Now it happens that the highest Dissenting authority on the subject, Richard Baxter—the chief and the most moderate of those Caroline Puritans who profited by the Toleration Act—signed this very Article, while taking exception to this very point. He said in substance, 'I accept the Athanasian Creed in so far as it is a Creed: I do not conceive that by attaching my signature to the statement that as a Creed it is to be believed, I affirm my approval of its anathemas.' Such an interpretation of the subscription on such authority would have satisfied my friend had he known of it. He was not the less of course a heavy loser by his conscientious conviction. His sacrifice was as great as a youth of his age could well make; for there were not half-a-dozen of his contemporaries to whom Oxford offered a fairer promise of success or a more congenial education; and a fellowship would have been of great value to him. I met him some few weeks ago, and we referred to the subject. He then said that, even apart from the question of conscience, he had little reason to regret his choice. His life would of course

have been utterly different had he gone to Oxford. He would have chosen a different profession, and every relation and incident of his career must have been other than it has been had he entered upon a professional education with an Oxford fellowship at twenty-two instead of being educated at an unendowed University, and having to support himself from the age of one-and-twenty. 'But,' he said, 'I believe that I have on the whole made as much of my life—I should rather say, I have not done, enjoyed or suffered less—than I should in the career which Oxford would have opened to me. My earlier manhood was certainly fuller than it would have been at Oxford of hope and defeat, of pain and pleasure, but it was such as, at the time, I should have preferred; though certainly none of its compensations were such as I could have foreseen. Taking it altogether, I conceive that I have been repaid by an extraordinary Providence even in worldly success; and perhaps more than repaid in all else.' In another case I have seen a single act of self-sacrificing kindness open a direct road to fortune. In all these instances, much that was regarded as misfortune or sacrifice became a Providential instrument of good, not merely in a spiritual but in a plain practical sense, obvious to the world's judgment; while some things, which even those who think much more of the influence of circumstances on character than of mere worldly prosperity would have regarded or did regard as calamities, proved under Providential guidance the greatest of advantages."

"I have seen that happen more than once," said Gerard. "Nothing is more striking to myself, or I should think to all men who have thought much over

their experience of life, than our utter incapacity to know what may and what may not be real good. The Christian proverb that speaks of 'blessings in disguise,' though it has been so used that it offends our ears by the numerous and offensive associations of falsehood and cant which it recalls, is quite as true as its Pagan converse which notes the frequency of '*vota Dⁱs exaudita malignis.*'"

"There is," said Cleveland, "another saying—one of the few Shakesperian mottoes I greatly admire—the truth of which observation and experience have equally enforced on me. It is, however, historical, and owes only its form to Shakespeare. I mean the dying sentence of Wolsey :

'Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my King, He would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.'

I suppose there are few who, after they have passed middle life have not had bitter reason to recall these words, applying them to some of those for whom they have wrought and suffered most loyally and persistently."

"If there be," said Vere, "one cant that more than any other offends a Christian ear it is the cant of religious sentimentality with which the pages of some novelists essentially anti-Christian and immoral are larded. Among English writers I might name 'Guy Livingstone' and *Ouida*, especially the former, as signal offenders in this sort. The elder Dumas is a more pardonable because more impulsive and unconscious culprit ; but even his most glaring immoralities

are not so offensive as his penitential outbreaks of mawkish piety. Yet in a conversation between two of the swash-buckler drinking debauched heroes of the *Three Musketeers*, you may remember one phrase—it occurs in the *Vicomte de Bragelonne*—which is worthy of a purer writer than Dumas and a truer nobleman than the Count de la Fére. Do you remember the passage wherein Athos and D'Artagnan discuss the apparent ingratitude of princes; and the former concludes the argument by saying, 'You find, then, that men are often ungrateful, but that God never is'?"

"Are men so very ungrateful?" answered Gerard. "I forget where I found a little verse that reflects my own life-impressions very truly:—

'I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning;
Alas, the gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning.'

I have seen the commonest acts of kindness or courtesy—acts which to the doer, and often to the world, seemed mere matters of course under the circumstances—call forth such outbursts of gratitude, sometimes evanescent, but often persistent and devoted, that I have been compelled to ask myself, 'What has been the previous experience of those who are so much surprised at and so thankful for so mere a trifle of human good-will?'"

"Perhaps," said Cleveland, with that half smile which so often perplexed his friends in regard to the sincerity of his sarcastic paradoxes, "it may be possible to reconcile the bitter truth of the prose that concentrates experience into epigram with the 'sweet reasonableness' that finds honeyed utterance in poetry. The over-

whelming thankfulness must have broken from the lips of men ; the systematic ingratitude must, I think, have revealed the hearts of women."

"I cannot let that sentence pass save under protest," answered Gerard. "We both judge women by the exalted standard of exceptional experiences ; we have both owed to them no ordinary happiness, and both felt how utterly that happiness would have been wrecked had those who have influenced our lives not transcended immeasurably the average contemporary level of their sex. Consequently, our absolutely opposite habit of thought on this subject is to me a constantly renewed surprise. I have no reason to think women less grateful for recognized kindness than men ; unless in so far as they are generally less deeply and permanently impressed by any feelings not instinctive. But if you have encountered, or learned your thought from those who have encountered, a different experience, let me suggest a possible explanation. Gratitude must be called forth by pure unselfish disinterested kindness ; and women feel and know how much of that which they receive is not exactly disinterested."

"Possibly," retorted Cleveland. "I could make still better excuses, and by the dozen ; but they are excuses, not answers to the charge. Women feel little the kindness they have never missed ; the patience, forbearance, guardianship, that they have never been able to exhaust or renounce. Their vanity, pampered from the days of the Round Table to the present, is taught to think soft words, sweet smiles, a kiss or a hand-clasp, ample repayment for the most laborious service, the most costly

sacrifices ; and most of them take care to maintain the value of such rewards by bestowing them charily. Moreover, they are on the whole least grateful for the service that is most disinterested: perhaps it wounds their pride to feel that a man chivalrous enough to incur trouble, loss, and risk for them cannot be made the fool and slave of the passion or sentiment it most gratifies them to inspire."

"It pains me not a little," said Vere, "to hear such language from you. Gerard himself, holding a political creed which is senseless and baseless if it do not rest on a profound belief in the essential truth and justice of human instincts, the general soundness of human nature, is hardly consistent in speaking so doubtfully of the existence of true human sympathy and disinterested kindness. But I cannot understand how you, Cleveland, to whom chivalry is not an ideal but a principle, and courtesy a point of honour, can endure to think or speak the bitter taunts, the contemptuous cynicisms, which reproduce in an English home and Christian age the misogynism of Hellenic corruption and the suspicious jealousy of the Oriental seraglio. Owing your life so happy, what can so embitter your every reference to women with the venom natural to a man whose life feminine temper, caprice, falsehood have ruined?"

"Chivalry," rejoined Cleveland, "not only tolerated but I suspect presupposed a certain veiled contempt for those to whom it rendered such exaggerated homage. If there had not been understood methods and principles of counteraction in the background, men would not have ventured so to flatter the imperious

caprice and changeful temper of those on whose domestic simplicity and subordination their comfort depended. It is only those who have not to control a spoiled child that can afford to amuse themselves by exciting her petulance and gratifying her whims during an idle afternoon. Even the praise bestowed on Lancelot's 'faith unfaithful' suggests that ordinary knights,—less perfect in the courtesy to which his visible sadness lent a charm that no woman could resist—reserved their deepest devotion for ladies not already won. We may well read the necessities and hard realities of life between the honeyed lines of the troubadours. Even the famous story of the Sieur de Lorges (and especially the approval of his act by a royal knight-errant like Francis I.) shows that the chivalric homage of knight and troubadour was bounded by somewhat narrow limits. Our contemporaries would not think it worth while to snatch a five-shilling glove from under the jaws of raging lion or tiger; but they sometimes show a loyalty that can endure sterner tests without hope of requital and without the applause of a brilliant Court. Men who are called hard and cynical will calmly sacrifice the hopes, endure silently the dreary abnegation, of a lifetime for wife, child, or sister; will give the loyal service of long and painful years as mere matter of course. Such men take ingratitude for granted, without feeling tempted, even for a moment, to throw up the charge that affection has undertaken or Providence imposed. And they need be prepared for such a result; women are never grateful for kindness they have never been allowed to miss, and 'yield their sweetness only to the foot that tramples on them.'"

"I doubt," said Vere, "whether there be any sort of comparison between the two kinds of devotion. The kind of requital for which the knight-errant looked must generally be out of the question in such rare cases as you describe. For it is only where love of that kind is long secured, or is not sought, that the calm enduring patience which no fault and no ingratitude can disturb is possible. The slightest admixture of passion would introduce, to borrow an illustration from mechanics, an unequal heating and cooling fatal to the even temper and perfect tenacity of the bond; the disappointment of misunderstood or misused affections would wear it out, the strain of persistent ingratitude, the sudden blow of wanton unkindness snap it, the keen acid of bitter feeling eat it through. By your own words it is evident that the mainspring of the devotion you think of is an affection essentially domestic; and the devotion of knight or troubadour was as unlike domestic or even conjugal love as any sentiment well could be."

"I am not quite sure of that," answered Gerard. "I conceive that the strongest, most durable, and at the same time most reverential and devoted—nay, I will say most romantic—love is that which has been heated in the furnace of passionate hope, tempered in the earlier years of a perfect marriage, and welded into absolute firmness by the blows of common joy and sorrow. If there be a love now-a-days that would risk the peril of the arena in honour of its object, or bear the strain of long-continued silent sacrifice, it is the love of such marriages as are said truly enough to be made in Heaven."

He paused abruptly: and a few moments elapsed before Cleveland chose to make his cynical rejoinder.

"You miss the moral of the story if you forget that the lady *threw* her glove into the lists. No marital chivalry, after the honeymoon, would stand such a test. Conjugal love must be returned, in so far at least that the one *qui se laisse aimer* must not show absolute selfishness and reckless insatiate vanity. Wives may love without respect or esteem; husbands seldom or never; and—as she is not here—I may say that if Ida were to throw her most precious possession—except it were one of Cornelia's jewels—from yonder crag, I don't think that the Royal Life Insurance Company would run the slightest risk thereby."

"Probably not," said Vere drily. "The crag falls perpendicularly into twenty feet of water, and you are a very fair swimmer."

"To me," said Dalway, "chivalry, ancient or modern, seems to find its fitting representative in Don Quixote rather than in Bayard. I have so little regard for or interest in any of its forms that I would fain recall you to the point from which you have diverged; the question of Providential Government."

"Chivalry," said Cleveland, "was in itself a signal example of Providential guidance as seen in history. In the decaying civilization of Rome the actual position of woman had become deeply degraded in proportion as her legal equality with man and personal independence were recognized. The relations of sex had ceased to be refined, pure, loyal, or even respectable. Those, therefore, who believe as I do that all true civilization, all national dignity of character, all manhood worthy

the name, have their root in the home, must recognize in Gothic barbarism an essential superiority to the civilization of the Lower Empire. It is obvious that the rude valour of the barbarians, the savage liberty of nations whose every freeman was a soldier, was needed and sufficed to regenerate the coarser and harder elements of the manhood that had died out of Roman and Greek life. To no prophetic discernment could it be equally apparent how the more subtle and refined elements of true manliness—the courtesy, grace, self-command which belong to civilized man—were to be restored; it was even to be feared that they might be permanently extinguished by a barbarian conquest. It was through chivalry that Providence secured the nobler moiety of the necessary revival of decrepit humanity, whereof the other and lower moiety was achieved by Gothic and Teutonic courage. The life of the Middle Ages was a life of incessant warfare, tending indeed to produce a type of human character harder and nobler than any that was left in the Roman provinces, and free from their worst, because most unnatural, vices, but still a type essentially deficient in all the softer elements out of which intellectual culture, social courtesy and moral civilization might once more be developed.”

“Yes,” said Sterne, “and you might add that monasticism did its best to aggravate the evil, as has been already indicated by one or two of the soundest historical critics, by withdrawing from the world and excluding from the function of parentage all those gentler natures to whom a life of warfare was repugnant; at the same time that bigotry exterminated

by fire and faggot whatever intellect of the finer order rebelled against monastic discipline and scholastic divinity."

"If, then," resumed Cleveland, "it had not been for chivalry, the tendency of barbarian conquest would have been to regenerate only in its harder and rougher virtues the effete manhood of Rome. A race of warriors and an age of warfare—where valour, and even ruthless valour, was the virtue of first necessity, and was therefore the virtue held in highest honour—could hardly have been made, as they were silently made, the cradle of modern civilization, unless the influence of women had been restored to a level as high as it had ever reached even in the Roman Republic or in the German forests; unless the domestic relations were not merely to be purified but to be refined and softened. Chivalry, even if regarded as the irrational exaggeration it seems to Dalway, met this latent but paramount necessity of the time. Its appearance at the critical moment when the stern valour of the North had dominated degenerate Europe—when the character of future civilization, then in embryo, trembled in the balance between martial ferocity and demoralizing asceticism—cannot be ascribed to that adaptation of human society to surrounding circumstances by which the Darwinists of sociology would account for the progress of mankind, as Darwinian physiologists have accounted for that of the animal world. The rude freemen of the North when, swarm after swarm, they conquered and possessed the fertile soil and softer climates of the South, recognized nothing so little as their need of softening and

refining influences. On the contrary, hardness, willingness both to inflict and to suffer cruelty would have seemed to them the one essential end of social organization and manners, as well as the chief aim and purpose of individual education. The fortune of a remote future never affected their imagination and could nowise influence their idea of the institutions suited to themselves. The introduction of chivalry, then, was not a natural development, but a direct contradiction of all their conscious needs and purposes, though it was of vital importance to the work they were unconsciously preparing—the civilization that was not to flower or bear fruit for some four or five hundred years. How then will Evolution, with its theory of immediate adaptation to immediate surroundings, account for the appearance and development of this social anomaly—so strange in itself, so uncongenial to the races among whom it arose, yet so dominant, so persistent, that it moulded their society, overruled the notions natural to their age, and tempered their barbarism into a civilization higher than the world had previously seen?—How can it be explained except on the theory that human history is distinctly controlled and guided to definite and very distinct ends by a wisdom higher than human? Had it not been for chivalry there could have been no such civilization as ours. The Materialist, the Evolutionist treats chivalry as a craze—a craze, however, which endured for several centuries among the most practical and powerful of nations. This craze has accomplished greater results than even the savage valour out of which it so strangely sprang, and which gave to it and

to the races influenced by it the mastery of the world. Is it rational or possible to ascribe, as we must ascribe such results to what you consider mere folly, and yet believe that the folly and its results were alike accidental?"

"You forget," said Sterne, "that for some time it seemed doubtful whether Europe was to be Christian and chivalric or Mahometan and polygamic; and that in the earlier ages of chivalry the highest extant civilization was Oriental and anti-chivalrous."

"True; and how, setting aside the idea of Providential guidance, explain that coincidence which at once introduced chivalry among the less civilized of the contending races, and secured—through a series of separate and long dubious struggles ending at every *vital* point in the victory of the less civilized over the more civilized—the final development of the highest civilization of all? It was necessary to that crowning product of so many centuries, the Christendom of to-day, first that the Aryan nations should be rendered chivalrous; secondly, that they should conquer and crush the then higher but essentially and potentially poorer civilization of the Mahometan East and South. Neither of these results could have seemed at all likely to merely human wisdom, if we suppose the highest human intelligence looking upon the character and condition of Europe before the Crusades, and possessed of all the knowledge accumulated during the interval for the benefit of this boastful nineteenth century. Each event was in itself supremely improbable; the combination of the two improbabilities could alone achieve the highest destiny open to distant gene-

rations of mankind. Both the improbabilities were realized, and through their joint realization the best result that could have been worked out of the pre-existing materials has been accomplished."

"Ay," said Gerard, "and note that the conquest of the comparatively civilized intellectual Moors and Saracens by the comparatively barbaric Norman and Franks was really the victory *in the long run* of a higher civilization over a lower. The Aryan chivalry—inferior in all actual features of civilization to those Oriental races which then possessed the best culture and discipline of their age—were, nevertheless, by force of character and by the nature of their race-institutions, capable of developing and destined to develop a social order, a culture, a world-subduing world-organizing energy, even a warlike discipline, above all a practical morality—in fine a civilization—far higher than could ever have been evolved out of the Saracenic and Moorish empires, whose culture, art, and power were then the finest in the world, and had probably reached very nearly the highest point they were capable of attaining."

"Take, again," said Cleveland, "the Crusades themselves. We shall all agree that, regarded from a statesman's standpoint in the light of immediate secular expediency, nothing could have been more preposterously unwise, nothing more dangerous to the internal welfare of the nations that engaged in them. Indeed the statesmen of the time, in proportion to their intelligence and calmness of judgment, were cordially opposed to the scheme of Asiatic conquest which so powerfully possessed the imagination of ambitious Norman chiefs and dominated the feelings of the multitude. A

Godfrey de Bouillon, a St. Louis, furnish the highest and noblest type of the Crusader; Richard Cœur de Lion must have far surpassed the average. Men like our own Henry Plantagenet and Philip Augustus were opposed to a movement that drained the strength of their realms and added to the already dangerous ascendancy of the Church; Edward I., the greatest of English kings, did not engage in the Crusade till the power of the Crown was firmly established by the defeat of Simon de Montfort; and returned home, never to resume so distant an enterprise, as soon as he succeeded to the Throne with all its domestic responsibilities. Nothing, again, could be more inconsistent with the true spirit of that religion which inspired the fanatics who attempted to recover for Christendom the tomb of Christ, the shores of Galilee, the Temple and the Mount of the Crucifixion. The Crusades then were the insanity of an age; the passion alike of saints and soldiers, the impolicy of politic princes, the unchristian fury of Christians. Yet they are held by some most competent historians (certainly not biassed by sympathy with their motives) to have contributed most powerfully to the actual determination of the vital issues whereon depended the fortunes of the world. They united the Christian nations in a league far more solid and enduring than any other motive could have formed against that Mahometan Power whose discipline intelligence and enthusiasm threatened to conquer them one by one; which actually did conquer and long maintained itself in Spain; which down to the close of the 17th century, continued to menace Vienna and Hungary, and holds by the sword to this hour the last

provinces retained by the Roman Empire on either side of the Dardanelles and the Egæan after Western Europe had long passed into new and nobler hands. They also brought to bear on European ignorance many of the most valuable results of Oriental culture. But taking the former point alone, no one who fairly appreciates how closely, in spite of the Crusades, the struggle between Mahometanism and Christianity was long balanced in Spain and on the Danube, can fairly doubt that but for the Crusades Europe might well have been conquered in detail by Asia, and Christianity by Islam. Here again an extraordinary outbreak of human perversity and religious inconsistency was made a most important means, if not a *sine qua non*, of that turn in the fortunes of humanity which is perhaps the most momentous in history. The Crusades failed, moreover, of their direct object. Jerusalem, recovered for years, was lost for centuries not yet expired; Constantinople and its home provinces shared the fate of Asia. Nevertheless the apparent military failure was a substantial political victory. It broke the power that threatened Christendom, and in Christendom the unborn future whose possibilities of good or evil are but dawning on us, whose vitality strongly contrasts the rapid decay of Asiatic greatness and promise. It created a moral union among Christian nations which survived all their quarrels; which survived indeed the original enemy, assisted materially to protect the line of the Danube against the Turk, and still influenced European feeling, if not European policy, when, in his later years, Louis XIV. allied himself with the Sultan; and thereby scandalized the public opinion of Europe

more than by the devastation of the Palatinate, or the seizure of the Spanish crown. Have we not here, if anywhere, evidence of superhuman wisdom bringing the grandest practically valuable results out of the wildest of human errors and absurdities?"

"I do not know," replied Sterne, "that you have any right to infer, whenever good comes out of evil, that some overruling power must have turned the evil to good account. To me it seems that the Crusades produced just the effect which a cold-blooded reasoner, reckoning on the unbounded folly of men—say, for instance, a far-sighted, ambitious and unscrupulous Pope, loyal to the Church as other Princes to their dynasties—might have anticipated; and that the triumph of Europe over Asia in the final result of the age-long struggle, was but the natural consequence of that inherent superiority which you ascribe to the Aryan race."

"Note," returned Cleveland, "that at that time the Aryan race was *not* superior in anything save inherent individual manhood, and perhaps, though this I greatly doubt, in its institutions. There was certainly more of liberty, more scope for individual action, in feudal Europe than under Oriental despotisms; but the discipline, the culture, the union of Islam were so far superior in military value to the feudal order of Christendom that all probability seemed in favour of the former. Observe, too, that three conditions, all apparently most unlikely—the growth of chivalry, the check given to Mahometanism partly through the union, such as it was, of Christendom effected by the Crusades, and, lastly, the victory of comparative barbarism over com-

parative civilization—were essential to the actual and desirable result. Failing any one of these three improbabilities, the civilization of our own age, spread over half the world, could not have been attained. That each of three such conditions, two of them absolutely independent and the third by no means a necessary or even a likely consequence of the second, should have been fully accomplished by mere accidental coincidence, is a mathematical improbability so great as certainly to constitute strong ground for believing that the coincidence was *not* accidental. If not accidental, since it certainly was due to no human foresight or policy and to no natural discernible causes, to what are we to ascribe it save to superhuman control and direction of human events?"

"A similar idea of the predestined triumph of Aryan democracy," said Gerard, "was made on my mind by reading Professor Creasy's '*Fifteen Decisive Battles*,' or rather perhaps by the reflections which that work inspired. I look back on a series of unconnected critical events in human history occurring at the most distant periods and among the most diverse races; and I see that each of them has tended to, I might almost say each has been necessary to, the one great result; the supremacy of the highest race and the consequent prevalence of the highest civilization which, so far as we can see, mankind could by this time have attained under any possible arrangement of events. Had the Athenians failed at Marathon, there was then no Western Power (remembering the timid selfishness of the Spartan oligarchy) likely to have arrested the march of an Asiatic conqueror wielding the great force

of the Persian monarchy ; a force which would have been welded into firmer coherence by each fresh victory. Secondly, had Themistocles failed to detain the Peloponnesian squadrons at Salamis, had the Greeks been defeated there or at Plataea, the same result must probably have followed. If at the fourth critical moment Carthage had crushed the Syracusan power, conquered and assimilated Hellenic Sicily, before the power of Rome had grown into a strength adequate to the great Punic wars, Europe would in all likelihood have been Orientalized. The immediately higher commercial civilization of Carthage would have triumphed over the then less refined and less advanced but more vigorous martial civilization of Rome. Hate Rome as we may, and I hate her the more as I learn to understand her better, she possessed two essential qualifications for empire which Carthage lacked. She could assimilate and she could organize; she absorbed and Romanized Italy while Carthage could only dominate Libya; she gave law and order to provinces which Carthage apparently could have used only to furnish mercenaries and merchandise. Could Carthage ever have imposed on Southern Europe and Asia Minor that 'Roman peace' which, despite its vices, its injustice, and its deliberate postponement of the well-being of provinces to the contentment of a city populace, was the condition of many past and present gains, perhaps of many more important results in the future? On a fifth occasion the victories of Alexander, Hellenizing Western Asia, prepared it to assimilate the civilization of Rome. The defeat of Hannibal—deeply as, in reading the history, we may regret his failure and hate his

conquerors—may be counted as the sixth of those critical conjunctures wherein the fate of the world has been decided by the event of battle, and decided always, again and again, in the same direction and to the same purport—for Aryan Europe against Semitic Asia. The Roman empire, and the facilities of communication it gave, the common law and languages it established throughout the then civilized world, are affirmed by nearly all the best and most thoughtful Church historians to have given Christianity such an opportunity, such freedom and facility for growth as it could hardly have enjoyed at any earlier moment. The simultaneous decay of all national religions, moreover, had left the field open to the new faith; left it without any rival possessing a hold on national pride, on public conviction, or on the cultivated intellect of the age. This is one of those coincidences on which, as I think justly, Cleveland lays so much stress. The Roman peace might have been treated as one of those accidents of adaptation which are explained by Evolutionists on the ground that till the favouring condition was attained all efforts in the new direction were crushed in the bud. But where we have *two* favouring and totally independent conditions concurring, and at the same moment see the germ to whose development they are necessary making its first appearance, we have a triple coincidence which cannot be ascribed to sheer accident without a gross disregard of the mathematical law of chances. Each decisive struggle again between Christendom and Islam, from the first check given to Moorish invasion by Charles Martel and by the Spanish mountaineers down to the siege of Vienna and the battle of Lepanto, marks a crisis in human

destiny—a moment when the fate of human civilization trembled in the balance; and at each vital instant the fortune of battle decided the event in favour of the remote but ultimate interests of mankind. Take, again, another issue in which, as we must all agree, mankind were deeply interested (though my idea of their true interests is diametrically opposed to Cleveland's); I mean the question of slavery. Is it possible to study the age-long history of that question without seeing how during the last four or six centuries influences and incidents of the most varied kind have tended to the destruction of one of the oldest and most tenacious of human institutions? There was no natural reason why the influence of the Church should have been thrown (as it was thrown) into the scale in favour of the thrall or serf; for there is nothing in the New Testament to discourage slavery, very much in the Old to support it; and that general spirit of Christianity with which slavery is affirmed to be incompatible had little weight either with the Court of Rome or with the clergy of her Communion. It was rather by an accident of her constitution, rendering the distinction between priest and layman so vital and paramount as to be hardly compatible with the maintenance of any human distinction that could conflict therewith,—rather by her determination to assert the right of every human being to become a priest and, as such, the superior of the highest layman—than by any intelligent or charitable purpose, that the Mediæval Church was insensibly led to wage a steady quiet almost silent, and therefore the more effective and successful, war against feudal slavery. The demand of feudal chiefs that their bondsmen should

not be ordained without their consent illustrates the character of the age, and the services which the Church's accidental adherence to the Christian idea of spiritual equality—an idea not so prominent in Christ's teaching as many of those which His followers promptly rejected or evaded—rendered to humanity. There could be no Fugitive Slave Law while Churches and Monasteries at every turn offered an inviolable sanctuary. The Church of Rome had abolished or almost abolished serfdom before the Reformation paralysed her power. Negro slavery, again, was apparently one of the most natural durable and important results of the discovery of America. The war which achieved the independence of our American Colonies threatened to perpetuate the curse by depriving the British Parliament and the Common Law, immemorially committed as both were to the traditions of freedom, of all power over those continental regions of British America to which slavery was most valuable, and where it was sure to spread ;—leaving the control of the matter to those who were interested in maintaining and extending the evil. Yet I believe that this very defeat tended directly to Abolition. Had the English Abolitionists in 1833 been confronted, not merely by the influence and interests of the decaying sugar planters of a few West Indian Islands, but also by the whole weight of all the Gulf States, of Virginia, Kentucky, and the Carolinas, they could hardly have prevailed. It was a necessary and generally accepted condition of their success that the planters should be compensated for the loss of a property recognised for generations by the law. It was possible to compensate the sugar-planters of the Antilles: to

purchase the freedom of some two millions of negroes on the Continent would have been an effort too great even for British enthusiasm and an awakened national conscience. The evil continued and extended itself in the United States till a property worth some two thousand millions of dollars, invested in four millions of human beings, rendered emancipation by purchase impossible, while received doctrines of law and equity alike forbade any other method. Nothing but a civil war—so bitter, so prolonged, so threatening to the national existence and to the imperial pride of the North as to override all regard for private interests and all scruples of respect for property—could have cut this Gordian knot, and secured by the sword the freedom of slaves too numerous and too valuable to be purchased even by the richest of nations. The strength, the courage, the resolve, the pride of the South, her passionate attachment to her peculiar institution, all that up to 1860 seemed to rivet most firmly the chains of the slave, really tended to destroy slavery. Without these the South would never have seceded, or, having seceded, would not have fought so long and so desperately; and it was the duration and the desperate character of the struggle that involved the fall of slavery. To employ a physical illustration, the stubbornness of the resistance, the long delay interposed by obstacles almost equal to the forces that dashed against them, converted much of the military momentum into the heat of passion needed for such a work. At first, not only Congress and the President, but the great majority of the Northern people, disliked abolition only less than disunion, and would readily have given ample guaran-

tees against the one in order to avert the other. Only when the passions of war had fused all political aims, all constitutional principles, in one white heat of hatred to the South and everything Southern, could the palpable illegality of Executive emancipation have found approval and support from the people and the army. And *then* with the fall of slavery in the Southern States the doom of the institution was sealed; Brazil has practically abandoned, and Cuba cannot for another generation sustain it."

"True," said Cleveland. "Though my sympathies, my sense of right and justice, went from first to last with the Confederate States—though, moreover, I believe that when the Aryan and African races are once brought together in large numbers and in close contact slavery in some form is the best and only natural relation in which they can co-exist—though again I founded on such military experience as historians up to that time had recorded a theoretical belief that a country like the South could never be conquered while its population were willing to fight—my hopes were always clouded by my recollection that the whole course of history had run against slavery, and against the Powers by which slavery was upheld. It does not follow that I had for a moment the slightest doubt of the goodness of our cause; any more than in reading history one doubts that Hannibal was not only the noblest soldier and the truest patriot of his age, but that—so far as in a struggle between nations of that epoch, when might made right, such terms as right and wrong are applicable—the cause of Carthage in the second Punic war was altogether just, and the policy

of Rome sheer lawless aggression. But I did feel from first to last an instinctive fear, wholly independent of the particular conditions, that slavery would probably perish in the war; though in perishing it might reduce the fairest portions of the American Continent to the barbarism into which Jamaica is lapsing. I felt this as some true Catholic, in studying the history of his Church since the Reformation—while firmly believing in her creed and in her claim to represent Divine truth and right on earth—might yet feel that the hand of Providence has for centuries been against her. I thought, I repeat, that slavery would perish and I felt a deep misgiving that, as proved to be the fact, it would perish under the ruins of the Confederacy; and drag with it in its fall the most heroic army that ever fought, the noblest nation that ever suffered, for honour independence and public law. In one word, I believed, in the only sense those words can practically bear among reflecting men, that we were fighting against God.”

“I hardly understand,” said Gerard, “how, with such a feeling, you could consent to fight at all.”

“Do you forget, then,” rejoined Cleveland, “how often the hand of Providence has been manifestly against the better cause? Do you forget the Pagan saying that reconciles so many readers of history to the fall of the noblest States and the defeat of the truest heroes, ‘*Victrix causa Deis placuit, sed victa Catoni*’; or the cynical paradox of the French Empire that ‘Heaven is on the side of the bigger battalions’? Do you forget, again, that in the American struggle everything that was personally great and noble was to

be found almost exclusively on the Southern side? The North produced no gentleman and Cavalier worthy to be named in the same day with him who led so long the splendid chivalry of Virginia and the Carolinas, and before whom, on every occasion, the Northern cavalry (often the Northern infantry) were scattered like chaff before the wind. The Unionists had no twenty statesmen whose combined moral and intellectual powers would have reached the level of President Davis—indeed, the comparative quality of the two nations could hardly be better illustrated than by contrasting the Mississippian soldier and gentleman chosen to rule the ‘rebels’ with the ‘rail-splitter’ representative of the ‘legitimate’ democracy, whose term, had he died in his bed four or five years later, would have been remembered only as marking the nadir of American political decline; the culmination of the vulgarity moral as well as formal, of the unworthiness and ignobleness that had so long dishonoured more and more deeply the chair of Washington. Lincoln’s uncleanness of language and thought would hardly have been tolerated in a Southern ‘bar.’ Or, again, take the favourites of the North—the best-known names in the camp and Cabinet—Sheridan and Hunter, whose ravages recall the devastation of the Palatinate, political rowdies like Banks and Butler, braggarts like Pope and Hooker, or even professional soldiers like Meade, Sigel, Sherman; these are the ‘household words’ of the North, and any one Southern chief of the second rank—Ewell, Early, Fitzhugh Lee, Hardee, Polk, Hampton, Gilmer, Mahone, Gordon—alone outweighs them all. Needless to remind you

that among the 'twenty millions—mostly fools' was no man whom even party spirit dared liken to the stern simple Virginian professor, the Cavalier-Puritan, whose brigade of recruits stood 'like a stone wall' under the convergent fire of artillery and rifles that was closing round them at Manassas: no A. P. Hill, second only to Jackson among the lieutenants of Lee; no strategist comparable to him whose death by simple self-neglect marred the victory of Corinth, or his namesake, who baffled so long the three-fold force of Sherman in the Georgian campaign. Rivers, railways, and brute numbers only enabled the Federal power not to conquer but to exhaust on fifty battle-fields, nearly all disastrous and disgraceful to the Union, 'the flower of that incomparable Southern infantry' whose superiority is acknowledged in these very words by one of the bitterest of Northern historians. Even did not the stain of a cruel, causeless, cowardly assassination rest upon his name, Washington himself could not sustain as soldier, statesman, or citizen a comparison with the last and greatest of the long list of Virginian heroes. Not all the military exploits of all former American history thrown into one can count with the defence of thirty miles of slender earthworks, by a force never from the first numbering more than 45,000, and at last dwindling to 28,000, against armies counting as potentially or actually available a quarter of a million. 'Since the last Athenian covered his face with his mantle and mutely died,' the world has seen no such example of absolute, unconscious simplicity, utter self-devotion, patriotism yet more signally exhibited in humiliating disaster than in a brilliant career of victory, as that

shown by General Lee; the first military chief of the age, yet greater in the college than even in the camp; the noblest member of a splendid chivalry, yet most noble amid the ruins of his cause, his country, and his fortunes; the one true knight *sans tache, sans peur, et sans reproche*, the living embodiment of all that is grandest in the ideals of the Past as of all that is simplest in the promised republican manhood of the Future: ideal soldier, pattern Christian, 'selfless man and stainless gentleman.' Little as man can know of the ways of Providence, what indication, however clear, of the probable purposes of Heaven could for a moment countervail to my conscience or to yours the warranty given for the righteousness of a cause by the names of Stuart, Stonewall Jackson, and Robert Edmund Lee?"

"What you feel, Cleveland," said I, "with regard to the South, I have felt all my life with regard to that general principle of which the South was but the noblest and last representative.

'This by no narrow bounds was circumscribed,'

'It was the cause of chivalry at large.'

To my mind chivalry represents whatever is hopeful, whatever is worth fighting for in human character and possibilities. I believe in, I care for, the utmost development of the highest intellectual and moral forms of manhood infinitely more than I believe in or desire to help forward the gradual elevation to such low standard as they may possibly reach of mankind at large. And if the latter be indeed a task imposed on humanity, it will best be achieved unconsciously in striving after the former. The philanthropist who thinks much and

therefore dwells eagerly on the progress achieved by the Many, does the work of his worst enemy, the demagogue. He fosters that arrogance and envy which are the natural vices of democracy, and that delirious drunken dream of 'equality' proximate and probable which keeps the multitude constantly in chase of a phantom, and of a phantom which draws them ever, morally and politically, further down the broad and easy way that leadeth to destruction. Therefore all my life long I have been a Conservative: therefore I was from December 1860 until now, and shall be to my latest day, a devoted partisan of the Starry Cross. The fall of Richmond took from my profession and my politics all the interest they ever had—beyond the vulgar need of making money and a stern sad sense of personal duty towards a cause of whose success I never for a moment dreamed. But even before that last struggle of fading chivalry began, I felt the almost despairing sentiment you describe not only in regard to the South, but in regard to the ultimate doom of every form of the Conservative or Chivalric idea. It was not by the votes that swamped us here, it was not by the overwhelming numbers that crushed our cause beyond the Atlantic, that I was dismayed—

———'Non me tua fervida terrent
Dicta, ferox; di me terrent et Jupiter hostia.'

I feel no more hope of ultimate victory now, when a Conservative Ministry is supported by what Gerard calls a Tory majority in both Houses, than I felt when we were outnumbered in every Parliament by three to

two; than I felt when—to save some eight thousand sabres and bayonets, the poor relics of the finest soldiery in the world—the last representative of Christian chivalry, foregoing for duty's sake the hope of a soldier's death, bowed to the manifest decree of the God of Battles, and endured to surrender his army and survive his country.”

CHAPTER XIX.

LIFE WITHOUT GOD.

THE whole of the party already introduced to the reader dined with Cleveland, and were joined by several ladies, and by one man of some scientific distinction representing the sentimental or poetic side of Nihilism almost as distinctly as Sterne represented its harder and more practical aspect. He would probably have preferred to call himself a Pantheist rather than an Atheist. As he came alone from the little village inn where he was staying, and had not far to walk home, he remained with us during the whole of our smoking-room conversation, or *tabacs-parlament*. I shall call him Merton. Some incident turned the current of talk upon the relation of religion to morality, a topic upon which Vere and Cleveland naturally embraced views diametrically opposed to those of Sterne and the new-comer.

“You should remember,” Vere said, in the course of the discussion, “that your morality and that of nearly all Materialists, especially English Materialists, is in essence and origin Christian. You may try hereafter to found an ethical system upon a new basis wholly independent of that supplied by the education of individuals or of communities in Christian or at least in religious doctrines; but as a matter of fact both the

principles and the details of your actual code are taken in your own despite from Christianity, and would very commonly be quite other than they are had they really been worked out, as you have tried to work them out, by logical deduction from secular premises. The virtue of chastity, for instance, had not its origin and finds little support in a purely natural morality; and the obligations of marriage are so distinctly Christian, or religious, that they could hardly sustain themselves for even two generations after Christianity had lost its hold upon the mind of society."

"I can hardly admit that," said Sterne. "Remember, for example, that the marriage-laws of ancient Rome were scarcely less strict than our own, and that, under the Republic, the purity of Roman houses seems to have been beyond suspicion."

"Ay," interjected Cleveland. "That purity was an essential part of the patriarchal idea, and that idea was the basis of Roman life and law. Besides, morality based on the subjection of the individual to the State is no more 'natural' and far more artificial than that based on a supposed revelation."

"No doubt," continued Sterne, "Roman domestic life had been thoroughly corrupted before the founder of the Imperial dynasty declared that 'Cæsar's wife must not be suspected.' But the story of Cornelia, however unfounded in fact, indicates what were the ideas and what the standard of domestic life and duty familiar to Roman thought. Where a matron could speak of her sons as the choicest of jewels, where tradition paid the highest reverence to a wife who had refused to survive her honour, marriage and the home

must have been held in reverence as great as is paid to them now in England and in Germany."

"Of course they were," Cleveland again interposed. "Ancient religion was national; and every primary law, usage, and tradition was part and parcel of the national religion."

"And, again," pursued Sterne, "we know that Roman law placed the wife as absolutely as the children under the *patria potestas*, with its right of life and death; yet, while we have traditions which at least prove that Roman feeling recognised the father's moral right to exert this authority in its extremest form over his son, we have not a single tradition of domestic capital punishment inflicted on a woman; a fact which—bearing in mind the sternness of Roman temper, the severity shown to a vestal convicted of unchastity, the rarity of divorce, coupled with the extreme jealousy of domestic honour—suffices to prove how faithful as a rule Roman wives must have been, and how far their fidelity must have been appreciated and rewarded."

"Of course," returned Vere, "I did not intend to imply that marriage and matronly chastity are not of older origin than Christianity, or any other existing form of religion. As matter of fact, however, I believe that no especial sanctity has been attached to them, save when bound up with the hereditary law which was a heathen's religion; as in a very few exceptional cases, whereof that of Rome is the most remarkable. We must not forget that Roman law and Roman religion were in the old days one and the same, and probably the sanctity attached to marriage grew out of the *patria potestas* rather than gave rise to it. I say, however,

that maiden and married chastity are not of *natural* obligation, and could never retain their peculiar binding force when once mankind were emancipated from *all* supernatural sanctions, and from all laws resting originally on a supernatural basis; whether Pagan, Moslem, or Christian."

"Surely," interposed Merton, "the social bond must retain its natural and obvious validity even were no single man left alive who could remember the days when men believed in revelation, in a Creator, or in a future state of moral requital? And if, as probably most of us believe, marriage be essential to the permanent wellbeing and order of society, it would be enforced by precisely the same sanctions that would put down any other form of anti-social vice."

"I think not," said Gerard. "The relation of the sexes, though matter of public interest, is yet primarily and essentially matter of private concern and private contract. And no social sanction would be allowed, under the rule of pure Materialistic philosophy, to override the deeper, incomparably clearer, more definite and naturally paramount interest of the individual in such a matter, or the right of two coequal citizens to cohabit or to separate as they please, provision being once made for the children."

"I mentioned this, however," continued Vere, "only as one among many examples of the actual laws which Materialistic ethics really derive from religion. Put religion aside, and I see no right and no just reason in virtue of which society can claim to interfere, whether by law or by opinion, with any relation between men and women—even with pure and simple prostitution."

"Simply this right and reason," said Merton, "that all promiscuous relations are injurious to the community at large, and that the welfare of the community at large—the greatest happiness of the greatest number, if you will—must override in Positivist ethics all merely personal considerations, wishes, and feelings."

"Whatever," answered Cleveland, "may be the conceivable forms of a future morality from which religion is to be excluded, one thing, I think, is quite certain: that what you call Positivism will have nothing to do with it. Positivism attempts to borrow the authority of religion while dispensing with all its sanctions; and this is a simple impossibility. Religion gives us a moral code, emanating from an infallible irresistible authority, and enforced by terrible penalties here or hereafter. Such an ethical law may well command and even coerce the obedience of mankind. But, in these days at least, when individual liberty is held so sacred and when its claims are so high and paramount, it is I fear unreasonable to imagine and impossible to expect that men will ever consent in practice to accept a code equally strict, emanating from no higher authority than that of individual teachers and sanctioned only by legal and terrestrial penalties; against which the conscience will certainly revolt, as imposed by mere tyranny and involving an unwarrantable interference with personal freedom."

"The personal freedom of the one man," returned Merton, "cannot possibly be allowed to menace the welfare of the community, and the community will always be strong enough to enforce its obvious rights. Of course the mere *ipse dixit* of an individual teacher,

or even of a school, however wise, could not give bind-force to a system whether of law or of morals; but when once such a system has been formally and deliberately sanctioned by society at large, it will have all the authority that law can give it; and after all it is the authority of law and of opinion—which under a Positivist or even under a Democratic Government would gradually be more or less fused into one—that now binds the conscience and controls the conduct of men; if not always efficiently yet with an effect far greater in practice than that of their religious convictions.”

“In the first place,” said Cleveland, “you cannot induce a society thoroughly penetrated by the idea of personal freedom to accept a system by which personal freedom would be almost abolished. It is in this, even more than in the economic dangers and difficulties easily discerned by philosophers and students, that the practical impossibility of Communism lies. If Communism could be made to work without constant and intolerable interference with the privacy and the liberty of individuals, I think the probability that democratic envy of wealth would insist on trying it very strong indeed. One chief barrier against it is that, as soon as you begin to work out in detail a practical scheme of Communistic life, you are compelled to impose on each member of the community an inquisitorial tyranny, an intolerable, minute, incessant control, which an Asiatic caste society might bear; but which no promise, however gratifying to greed, envy, and malice, would render endurable to the temper of the European races, and especially of the Anglo-Saxon family. In your scheme

of irreligious or æsthetic morality, whatever it is to be, you must leave the personal conduct of individuals certainly not less free from social control than now—wherever it does not directly and visibly touch the immediate interest or actual safety of society. You will never be allowed to proscribe by law actions not palpably and primarily concerning the community; and opinion will have the less force that it will be no longer based upon some perhaps indefinite but traditionally superhuman sanction, but must rely on the personal ideas of a multitude of individuals; individuals no one of whom will be recognised by the person whose action is canvassed as entitled by superior wisdom, rank, or character to pass judgment upon him, and whose mere number does not confer either wisdom or moral weight.”

“Before we go into the question of future moral laws or moral sanctions,” returned Sterne, “I should like to ask how much influence religion really exercises, whether directly or indirectly, over the daily life and practical conduct of our own generation?”

“I think,” said Vere, “that that influence is very great, much greater than even conservative moralists generally recognize. Of course we have to consider its indirect as well as its direct power. But even directly, I believe that it has a very great influence. Religion gives even to positive law much of its actual authority. If, for example, the laws against theft rested simply on that force which must in the last resort assert them against thieves, the whole proletariat would stand morally in that attitude in which professional thieves now stand; regarding the law as framed by the influence if not by the sole power of property holders for

their own benefit, and as something indifferent or hostile to the poor, which they are perfectly entitled if they can to evade or violate. The thief by profession does not regard legal punishment as in any sense disgraceful; and but for the indirect authority of religion, operating on him through its strong influence on social opinion, he would not, I believe, consider himself as a degraded scoundrel who deserves all he gets when found out, but would look on the law and on society in the spirit of a Highland chieftain of the Middle Ages, who considered himself as engaged in legitimate warfare against the civilized Lowlands; a war in which no quarter was given, but of which plunder was a legitimate incident and object, and in which detection and capture were mere defeat, involving no other disgrace than might attach to want of strength or skill. In our days the thief, and still more the multitude of lawless characters, is cowed to a great extent by the consciousness that every man's hand is against them—that the law would in case of need be backed by the entire physical force of the community—but yet more by the sense of social contempt and hatred. The conviction of rightful authority, of a cause unquestionably just, which religious sanctions have given to the honest part of society, is essential to that cohesion and decision which constitute its peculiar strength; as on the other hand a certain consciousness of guilt and of fighting against fate “demoralizes” the lawless, rendering them incapable of combination and organization even for their common object of plunder. But for this difference we should require a police superior, if not in numbers yet, by virtue of numbers combined with discipline and organi-

zation, in effective strength to the whole of the criminal classes. Now if you could do away with the traditional authority of the Eighth Commandment, you would have at least the whole of the proletariat naturally—and we could hardly say wrongly—approximating to the moral attitude of the thief and regarding plunder (since *they* have no property to be stolen) not as disgraceful in the last degree, but simply as a question of policy and prudence. Whether each man should or should not rob his wealthier neighbour would be as mere a question of personal convenience and interest as with a certain school of philosophers, happily very limited in number, is now the question whether the proletariat as a body, in right of numbers and votes, should or should not plunder particular classes—as they have pillaged the Irish Churchmen, robbed Irish landlords, and threatened to rob landlords or capitalists in general. Grant that a considerable majority even of those who have no property of their own might conclude that on the whole it was best to sustain and to obey the law as it now stands; still disobedience would be branded with no such infamy as the conscience of a people educated in Christian ethics has for ages attached to theft or embezzlement; you would have no instinctive feeling of contempt and hatred towards the thief on the part of the community as a whole. You would lose all the moral forces which now operate to restrain thieving, and would depend simply on the physical power and practical fear you could bring to bear. What physical force could in such a state of public feeling protect property? I doubt very much whether any physical force could protect even life, and prevent

personal outrage, if the law were backed by no moral instinct; if the criminal regarded himself and were regarded by others not as a violator of principles sanctioned by the Deity but simply as a breaker of social rules; in a word, as we now regard so-called political offenders, or as demagogues and simpletons regard poachers."

"But," replied Merton, "no one proposes to abolish morality. It is simply a question of the *kind* of moral code that reason could justify, and of the sanctions by which that code could be enforced. Let me recall you, therefore, to the first point, to that previous question just put—what is the actual value and effect of those religious sanctions whose abolition you think would destroy morality altogether?"

"The purport of my argument," rejoined Vere, "was to insist strongly at the outset upon the enormous value of the religious sanction in strengthening and giving authority and efficacy to human law. But you may be right in charging me with a divergence from the point, since probably we should begin by considering the direct and immediate influence of religion itself on the personal conscience. I say, then, that I rate this influence very highly indeed. Remember that all our notions of right and wrong, all our distinctions between that which is and that which is not permissible, are as yet derived directly and immediately from religion. We are educated from the cradle to think certain acts so infamous as to be almost impossible, and very many others sinful in the last degree; so that only very strong temptation induces us—even if we have ceased intellectually and logically to believe what we were

taught—to commit them. The very idea of duty, as it at present exists, is religious. If we owe obedience to parents or to the law, it is because God has given His sanction to certain human authorities. If we regard the free indulgence of the senses—apart from excesses dangerous to health—as wicked, or even as discreditable, we do so because we have received impressions on that subject through the whole of our earlier and more impressible years from an education resting on no other foundation than that supplied by religion. Set religion apart, and what foundation can you find in reason for that maiden modesty and matronly purity which give their principal charm to women; but for which few men would venture on the close partnership of marriage, without which half the ties of home would lose their sweetness and their power? Set aside religion, and what sanction really binding on the conscience can you find for filial respect and duty? Set aside religion, and what beyond mere personal affection binds the parent to toil for the children, the husband to respect and cherish the wife, the wife to show deference and compliance to the husband? Set aside, again, religion itself and those traditions which, if not strictly religious, are certainly so illogical as addressed to mere interest, however enlightened, that they must perish under a rule of pure reason—and why should any man risk life or limb for the safety and honour of his country?”

“Still,” interrupted Sterne, “you hardly keep to the point. You say that without religion there would be no logical reason for the performance of certain duties necessary, as you at all events think, to the cohesion

of society even in its simplest elements. When we come to reconstruct morality it will be our place to answer all this. What we wish to hear from you, in the first instance, is, what actual power religion exercises over the conduct of life ?”

“I have said,” replied Vere patiently, “that in my opinion all the duties now recognized or performed are recognized on grounds and enforced by sanctions distinctly religious. I have said that our moral ideas and conduct are governed by the impressions education has made, and which are never effaced from our minds; and that moral education does as a matter of fact rest upon religion. Taking this for granted, you must see that at present the whole edifice of extant European morality is founded upon Christianity; and even if you could replace that foundation by another, the religion with which you propose to dispense is, as things actually stand, the basis of ethics. But putting aside the general influence of education and tradition, let us ask why men abstain from one class of actions and perform another, where they are not under fear of legal penalties? We know as matter of fact that the idea of legal punishment affects very little the daily life of any but the criminal or lawless classes. What then is it that constrains the rest of us to the duties and sacrifices of this work-day world? Those duties are hard, those sacrifices are considerable, though habit renders them matters of course scarcely perceptible to ourselves; though their fulfilment is with most of us probably a sort of ‘ reflex action ’ of the conscience. Why do men marry and bind themselves for life to adhere to one woman, and on the whole, if in many cases with occasional lapses, faithfully fulfil the

obligation? Some no doubt marry because, in the first place, they cannot obtain the society of the one particular woman they most desire on easier terms. But, after all, is it not probable that most men would on grave reflection and by deliberate choice rather give up that one woman than pay the irrevocable price they do pay, if habits of thought dependent on religion had not introduced into their most egotistical calculations the Christian idea that there can be no lasting safe settlement but in marriage? Why are so many of our youth what is called 'steady,' abstaining from certain amusements and enjoyments regarded as discreditable? You may say, because they fear the opinion of those around them, on whom their fortunes and their comfort depend. I doubt this explanation because, in a somewhat varied experience, I have found the most independent minds as a rule the most free from low sensual vices. I believe that on the whole a far smaller proportion of vicious careers are found among that class of men whose pride or whose thoughtfulness renders them very indifferent to and contemptuous of public opinion or social criticism, than among that great majority who are more or less afraid of and governed by the customs and opinion of those among whom they live. I doubt the effect of social censure, again, because as matter of fact young men are chiefly sensitive to the opinion of their own associates and equals; and that opinion does not constrain them to virtue though I admit that it does not on the whole encourage flagrant vice. I believe that the true explanation is to be found in actual genuine conscientiousness; a conscientiousness which operates differently upon the thoughtful minority and upon the thoughtless majority,

but operates on all. The average young man abstains from open habitual vice, because he has been brought up to think it wrong and does not wish to be at war with his conscience. The number of those whose religion is more conscious—who actually fear to offend the Almighty and incur the penalties denounced against sin, if not by the Gospel itself yet by the creed in which they have been educated—is perhaps larger than is commonly supposed. Even the thoughtful men who have on conviction rejected merely traditional ethics and Christian sanctions but still believe in a God, (whether they do or do not believe in a future life) have a very strong reluctance to alienate themselves from Him. Much of what the world calls vice and Christians sin seems to them rather *malum prohibitum* than *malum in se*. But in those years when the passions are strongest and temptation most frequent, they have seldom clearly convinced themselves that these things are *certainly* innocent; and not feeling sure of their innocence, they prefer not to do what may, for aught they know, be displeasing to Heaven; what at any rate would render them uncomfortable in their hearts and uneasy as to the approval of Providence. Uncertainty does not necessarily destroy the authority of conscience or the influence on conduct of principles learnt in youth. Only the conviction that they are false can make earnest men quite content to disobey them. Women, again, are very largely influenced by religion, though perhaps yet more strongly by the opinion of others; Cleveland would say, by the morals in fashion. But moral fashions derive more than half their power from the belief of those who submit to them that what

the world thinks wrong is also likely to offend Heaven. So, the opinion and instincts of women exercise over men an influence naturally strong, and enhanced by the fact that female opinion on moral questions appeals to a more than human authority. I affirm, then, that in an infinite variety of ways motives, which when examined are in their essence or in their origin religious, do control the conduct of all who profess any religion whatsoever; do constrain them to a multitude of little daily sacrifices, do keep them up to the constant performance of a multitude of duties, where in the absence of such motives they would very soon take their own way; and these duties and sacrifices are precisely those on which the practical working of society, the comfort of homes, the peace and decency of life depend. I affirm also that the direct motives, which I will call not merely religious but theological, have a much wider sphere of influence, a much deeper constraining force than is commonly supposed. A great number of women at least are consciously influenced at critical moments by actual theological fear and hope, and in their daily life by habits to which this fear and hope have given strength and sanction. The same theological motives operate to frighten a great many men, not indeed from minor sins, but, in the first place, from great and grave offences, and in the next, from a life of deliberate and defiant vice; so that practically the majority of professing Christians, of both sexes, are really coerced into habits of duty and restrained from the worst forms of occasional wickedness by theological influences. Again, I repeat that some men who do not think much of Heaven or Hell are directly influenced and controlled

by reverence for their Creator and fear of alienating themselves from Him—of feeling that He is passing more and more beyond the reach of their thought, trust, and prayer. And finally, I recur to my primary argument, that our standard of right and wrong is fixed by education; and that that education, acting not merely on one generation but through its effect on a score of preceding generations, really rests on a basis entirely religious and mainly theological. I believe, then, that words could hardly exaggerate the practical influence of religion upon life and conduct, even though the operation of religious motives is not at first sight obvious to outsiders; partly because religious motives are the last which even those whom they govern choose to assign, and partly because their force and effect, acting as they do chiefly through the habits and ideas they form, are very imperfectly appreciated by those whose career and daily practice they most affect; scarcely appreciated even in those moral crises in which man is more clearly and directly conscious of the influences that really control and decide his action."

"I fancy," said Merton, "that like most Christians, and especially like nearly all clergymen, you attribute to Christianity much that really belongs to chivalry, or, in a wider sense, to traditional class morality. Some twenty years ago, I, then an undergraduate in London, attended a lecture delivered by Sterne at a Secularist meeting-hall. I remember nothing of it, and at the time nothing much impressed me, save a single sentence which I have never forgotten:—'the word of a gentleman is a far surer pledge than the oath of a Christian.' After the lecture, a member of the audience, probably

a local preacher, admitted the truth of the saying, but explained it on the ground that 'the gentlemen of England were not Christians.' He certainly misunderstood Sterne's meaning, as he misstated the fact. At that time nine gentlemen in ten would have resented the allegation that they were not Christians; and Sterne's meaning of course was that, taking for granted the character of gentleman on the one hand and of Christian on the other, no practical man of the world would hesitate to prefer, whether in business or in personal relations, the simple word of the former as the more trustworthy pledge of the two. Is not the same thing true now, when, at least among the educated classes, the profession of Christianity has become much more of a party badge and much less a matter of course? Is it not true that most men, however sincere Christians, claiming the rank and having received the education of gentlemen, would feel their formal word of honour the most binding obligation they could give? I at least am sure that if I wished to impose upon a friend or acquaintance a peculiarly strict bond and one very unlikely to be broken through carelessness or temptation, I should not ask or wish for any oath, however awful its solemnity, but simply say—'You promise this on your honour as a gentleman!' Is it not true that in our daily lives we are much more frequently conscious of the restraint imposed by the impossibility of doing that which is unworthy of or unbecoming a gentleman than by any other obligation of duty or religion?"

"Certainly," replied Cleveland; "though I must make two remarks in qualification of my assent. The

class of duties to which we are constrained as gentlemen, and the nature of the constraint, are of a kind much more likely to be consciously recognized—exert a force much more directly felt as a check or control upon our inclinations—than those to which we are bound by the habit of thought formed by education or the convictions we have insensibly received through a long Christian ancestry. Again, the exclusive and special character of a pledge which we so rarely give enforces the obligation upon our memory as well as on our sense of honour; and our pride is inseparably entwined with a phrase which appeals to a class sentiment, to an exceptional position, and to the opinion of our equals. The special obligations or sanctions limited to the Few are almost always those which impress themselves most strongly upon the feelings to which they do appeal.”

“Precisely,” returned Merton. “And I wish for these reasons to insist on the importance of traditional ethics as a factor in that code of conscience which Vere derives solely from Christianity. Commercial morality, for example, is in this country remarkably lax. I should be afraid to rely on an ordinary man of business for anything beyond the fulfilment of promises enforceable by law, or whose breach would destroy his professional credit. But there are not only certain firms but certain classes who are notorious for a higher standard of conduct incompatible even with the recognized advantages commonly taken in business; who are known to all their acquaintance as men who would not sell shares or stocks of whose worthlessness they had received private information, or about which they

had special knowledge, to an unsuspecting customer; who would never dream of furnishing goods not fully equal to sample, and so forth. Now, I find that in nearly all these cases the special honesty, or more properly honour, is a family or caste tradition. There is a sect so limited in extent, numbers, and position—a sect which has few votaries save in the middle class—whose mere name, to those who know them well, is in some of the great commercial communities of the north almost a sufficient guarantee for this kind of special loyalty. Upon examination, I find the reason to be simply this:—that a majority of its influential members belong to half-a-score extensive family connections, who have shaken off all the bigotry of the Puritanism from which their creed descends, but being for generations engaged in commerce have retained a Puritan ideal of commercial morality. They certainly are not a commercial aristocracy; and their peculiar strictness of morality, coupled with laxity of theological doctrine, extends not only to business but to domestic life. Excepting a few black sheep among the youngest of the flock, it may be said that ‘all their men are true, and all their women are chaste.’ Clearly their religion has nothing to do with their conduct, as distinguished from that of others. It is not because they hold exceptional views as to the Atonement and the Incarnation, but because they have inherited family traditions on certain points, that they may be trusted on those points as few others in the same rank can be trusted. As to chivalry, it can at best only influence a small minority. The moment they ceased to be a small and superior class, gentlemen would cease to pride themselves upon a

special code of honour. But the kind of traditional morality whereof I speak admits of so many varieties, so many differing sources, that it might extend in one form or another over half the community; and I incline to think that it has often more to do with those cases wherein Vere discovers a distinct and direct religious influence on conduct than has religion itself."

"I am tolerably familiar," answered Cleveland, "with many of the traditional codes to which you refer; and, save perhaps that of chivalry, I think that none of them justify any serious deduction from the importance which Vere attaches to religious influences. He is clearly right, in the first place, in affirming that our existing code is derived directly from Christianity: that our vital definitions of right and wrong have their origin almost exclusively in the scriptural teaching or ecclesiastical training of generations. He is right I think, to a great extent, in saying that the sanctions by which that code is enforced, even where they are not what he distinguishes as theological, are nevertheless religious. He has reminded us how many, how various, how obscure are the methods by which religion enforces upon us those daily obligations which, because they form part of an habitual system adopted in practice by all or nearly all those whose opinion can influence us, we fulfil without asking why or whether we should do so; which are in fact habits impressed on the conscience, or moral instincts of race or class. I will grant that apart from religion you might be able to maintain a legal code not much more lax than the present; that an educated society, for instance, might learn to look upon theft as so fatal to social welfare that thieves and

swindlers must be regarded and treated as infamous. But when democracy has swept away the traditions of chivalry, and materialism has gradually destroyed the influence of Christian principles, I fail to see any basis for a code of personal or domestic morals not enforceable or enforced by legal penalties. And we know that the peace of society, the happiness of life, the prosperity of the nation, depend far more on private morals than on public law, let that law be as severe and as searching as you please."

"It seems to me," said Merton, "that you yourself have, in a very few words, furnished an answer to your own objection, and a foundation for a code purely moral; outside and beyond the law. You allow that a society educated to discern the consequences, at present only perceptible to cultivated men, of antisocial crimes, could render those crimes infamous; that is, could affix to them all the disgrace which now attaches to them in the minds of men not greatly influenced by religion. If so, society could in the same way repress all antisocial vices, all habits of life not conducive to the common welfare."

"No," said Cleveland. "Men of sense and justice will recognise that society has some rights which it may justly enforce not merely by legal penalties but through that common and vehement condemnation passed by public opinion which inflicts what we call infamy. But the greater part of a man's personal life lies beyond the scope of these recognized social rights; and in regard thereto no man of independent character, no man endowed with pride and strength of mind, will be inclined to pay the least respect to the opinion of

the community. Already the contempt of educated men for the judgment and the censures of the vulgar is strongly marked; already there is a divergence amounting almost to a divorce between the ideas of the populace and those of men who have thought out their moral code for themselves. Striking out from the practical working of personal and domestic ethics those religious rules and sanctions which operate powerfully, though indirectly and unconsciously, on the thought of those whose intellectual judgment rejects religion, there will remain nothing common between the many vulgar (whatever their social rank or education) and the independent Few. Every man who prides himself on superiority to vulgar prejudice, and on independence of popular caprice, will then be inclined to reject hastily and contemptuously the received morality, simply because it *is* received. Moreover there will gradually become visible a deeper, more pervading rottenness or weakness in Atheistic ethics, and one which may extend far beyond the small circle of really independent minds against which perhaps society might for some time wage a successful war. As the Irishman said of posterity, so will men of courage, energy, and spirit say of society:—‘What has my country, what has mankind done for me, what obligation do I owe to them, that I should sacrifice any pleasure of my own for their ultimate interests? What right has society to tell me that I shall cohabit with one woman only, and choose my partner for life?’ I do not say that this view is just, especially on the point I have chosen as an example; but I do say that when, on the one hand, public opinion on moral questions has lost the con-

fidence it now derives from religion and especially from revealed religion—when, on the other hand, the individual recognizes in social claims nothing higher than the selfishness of a majority set against his own selfishness—there will be a constant and formidable increase in the number of those who will live as they please, defy opinion, and evade the law. In short, conscience will disappear, with all its influences, secret and visible, from the lives of thousands. Where it survives it will be among self-reliant and self-respecting men, so exclusively individual, so completely divorced from such conscience as inheres in a public opinion, that it will give no sort of social security, no sort of sanction to the social code of which Positivists dream, and in which Secularists seem to believe. Sterne may remember that this was one of the difficulties which Secularism failed to solve. His chief was asked more than once to furnish an answer to the question:—‘Grant that there is such a thing as duty; why should I do my duty if I have no punishment to fear here or hereafter; especially, if moreover, there be no authority higher than my own to tell me what duty is?’ No real answer was ever given. The most that could be extorted was somewhat to this effect:—‘Do you wish to live the life of a swine in mere personal and sensual pleasure? What can life be worth if it be not spent in the performance of loyal service to others?’ That answer came naturally from a man who had been enlisted—while still influenced by all the eager enthusiasm of youth and all the golden dreams of ignorance—in a great public cause, right or wrong. But it is not an answer that could ever convince a man disposed

to put the question in earnest. Even now but a very small minority of educated men are Democrats by conviction and enthusiasm; and none but Democrats can consistently defer on moral issues to a community the majority of whose individual members they naturally despise. The minds likely to exercise great influence over others are just those which will most thoroughly disdain to accept the rule of their lives from a majority-vote; which will be most disposed to believe in their own superior fitness to judge what is right and wrong, and determine the limits of any social claim they may allow to be binding upon themselves. Even at present, while a large majority of all classes are bound together by a common creed, and nearly all by common moral traditions derived from that creed, there is a strong tendency to despise those who are content to accept their moral standard from public opinion. When public opinion ceases to rest its moral code on any foundation stronger than a *plebiscite*, what code of social ethics can exert authority over independent minds such as at this day pride themselves on their indifference to opinion so long as they have the approval of their own consciences? Where will you find an authoritative rule of right; where a sanction to enforce it on the self-willed or self-reliant?"

"I think," answered Merton, "that you overlook the increasing closeness of the ties that bind society together. I do not of course speak of the personal relations between men of different ranks. Classes are more separate in their lives and feelings than they ever were, and I admit that this constitutes a serious social peril; a peril, however, which we need only consider, in regard to the

present question, in so far as different classes tend to accept a different ethical standard and law of action; and in this respect there is less difference than formerly. At the same time the complicated social machinery of civilization binds the entire community together in such a way that no man can say with reason and justice what many men of rank, wealth, and power might say of old, in the haughty phrase you quoted just now—‘what has society done for me that I should do anything for society?’ Each man’s whole existence, in every arrangement of daily life and in the habits by which life is ruled, not less than in the material comforts which constitute so large a part of civilization, is utterly dependent upon others. No civilized man could enjoy any one of the conditions which render life worth having save by the aid of some hundreds at least of his fellow-men. All that distinguishes him from the savage, his house, his fire, his clothes, his food, his books, he owes to the constitution—political, industrial, and general—of the community to which he belongs. He has, then, no right to set that community aside, disown all obligation to it, and disdain its laws. Again, you overlook the tendency of civilization, with all its complicated relations, to give weight and control to public opinion. The proudest and most independent of those who,—receiving from nature a strong and self-reliant intellect, and from fortune the blessings of wealth,—seem to themselves above and independent of their fellows, dare not defy opinion as a Viking or a robber-knight of the Rhine was wont to do, or as some English adventurers and native princes may do to this day in the East;—though, by the way, Eastern princes

are probably more fettered, at least on one side of their life, by traditional public opinion than the most constitutional of European sovereigns. Of course the introduction of any new ethical system will be very gradual, and education will have to be slowly adapted to it. The tendency of education in our age, and in those scientific ages which will we hope succeed it, will be to insist more and more on the closeness, the indestructible validity, the varied and irresistible demands, of the social bond. We may hope—those Positivists whom you treat as dreamers and as the most inconsistent of Materialists *do* hope—that a new religion not liable to be overthrown by scientific discovery can be founded on this principle—on the cohesion and mutual interdependence of all the individuals making up a community, small or great, and ultimately of humanity at large. Moreover we may trust that in the gradual formation and spread of such a religion the sway of the soundest, justest, best-balanced minds will constantly increase and extend; so that when the theological idea of duty has vanished from the minds of men, it will be replaced by a strong sense of those social duties, that interdependence of men on one another which, according to the soundest thinkers of the age, it was the first and most essential necessity of civilization to enforce; the enforcement of which, indeed, affords a rough measure during its earlier stages of civilization itself.”

“I have not overlooked those considerations,” said Cleveland, “though of course it was your business rather than mine to insist upon them. I might reply that you in your turn have forgotten the age in which you live. No doubt, as Mr. Bagehot has so well shown,

the first step of civilization was to weld wild and untamed men into organized communities; first as tribes, then as nations, latterly as empires. There was a time when the social bond was almost everything; when it was thought, that the fault of the individual might endanger the entire community—as, for example, that the mutilation of the *Hermæ* by a single Athenian might bring down peril and punishment upon Athens as a State. In those days the individual was naturally and consistently expected to subordinate himself in every function of life to that State law which was at the same time a race-religion. But even twenty-four centuries ago the highest and best civilization was that which had most emancipated itself from this idea and given the largest scope to individual liberty and personal right. The superior attractiveness of Athenian life over the close, all-pervading military discipline of the Spartan Oligarchy—proved by the confessed happiness of Athenian life and the numerous examples that show how fiercely human nature reacted and rebelled against Spartan discipline when once a Spartan escaped from the immediate irresistible control and the inquisitorial vigilance of a system as inquisitorial and more unnatural than that of Venice—was commensurate with this extended personal liberty. The great moral movement, progress, revolution—call it what you will—of the last century, silently at work for centuries before, has had no effect more marked than its tendency to define more and more distinctly the frontiers within which individual liberty and social authority are respectively supreme, and to extend the boundaries of the former. You might as

soon hope to turn backward the current of the Amazon or of the Mississippi as to reverse the present tendency of individuality, domestic privacy, personal freedom, to extend and assert themselves against interference from without, and to narrow the authority, whether of law or of opinion, more and more exclusively within that region within which society is immediately and chiefly interested in action collective or individual—in which social interests are directly and visibly involved, and being so involved, can be fairly asserted to be of greater moment than those of the family or the single man.”

“I think,” said Sterne, “that I might on this point challenge your consistency. You admit, I believe, that the most certain unmistakable paramount characteristic of our age is the extension of democracy. And you think, though I do not, that democracy tends towards Communism. Again you affirm, and I am not prepared confidently to deny, that Communism involves such overruling of and interference with personal freedom and personal relations as the world, save in the case of Sparta, has scarcely seen. I presume also that you, in common with almost all the enemies of democracy, are struck by its tendency to control the individual conscience as well as personal liberty of action, to make public opinion, if only it be sufficiently general and permanent, the rule not merely of necessary public action but of right and wrong. In America, for example, very few men, however daring, however powerful by wealth and the influence which wealth used consistently for that purpose can give, venture avowedly and openly to defy the moral judgment of the multitude even in their private lives. They shrink from anything like

such display of luxury and splendour as is witnessed habitually among the wealthier classes of England; certainly they dare not defy public opinion in matters affecting the relations of sex, as too many Englishmen of fortune do. Moreover it seems to be generally agreed that few Americans, whatever their education, whatever their social tastes and habits, however long they may have lived as exiles by preference, can really shake off the belief that republicanism or democracy—involving at any rate absolute equality before the law, and the entire absence of hereditary rank and privilege—is the natural order of things; that monarchy and aristocracy are absurd in principle and doomed in fact. Now if this democratic temper be the most certain irresistibly growing and controlling tendency of the age, how can you say at the same time that the current of human thought and social habit has set so strongly in favour of personal independence and the limitation of social authority over the individual that it cannot be reversed or overruled?"

"You hardly," answered Cleveland, "put what I admit to be a fair challenge with the logical correctness and clearness I should have expected from you. Both tendencies exist; both characterize very strongly the so-called progress of civilization and the thought of this self-conceited nineteenth century. But whereas democracy has made comparatively little progress save in extent of dominion since Hellenic days, so that Massachusetts contrasts unfavourably in almost every quality on which Republicans of thoughtful and reasonable character would set much store with Athens in the time of Pericles, the assertion of personal liberty has grown and strengthened throughout the last two

thousand years. Its growth may have been now and then interrupted, more often concealed, by hostile influences. It is most powerful no doubt in this age under other than purely democratic governments, strongest in aristocratic England and semi-feudal Germany, weakest in the democratic societies of France and America. But it is still even in the latter more powerful than it ever was anywhere at any time since the destruction of the Roman despotism. It is, moreover, as I have said, the characteristic passion of the strongest tempers and the most powerful intellects, whereas democracy is the passion chiefly of the ignorant gregarious unthinking masses. Again, faith in personal rights and liberties within the scope of private life is perhaps the one faith so passionately held now-a-days by its votaries that they would suffer martyrdom rather than renounce it. Assume if you choose that democracy counts its adherents by millions where individualism can only claim scores or units: in calculating political and above all progressive forces you 'must weigh voices as well as count them;' you must consider not the numbers who adhere to an opinion but the tenacity and passion with which and the character of those by whom it is held. Now, in the first place, individualism, personal independence, is the passion of almost all the noblest minds among all the higher races, and on the average each man who asserts it in word and act outweighs in authority and intelligence ten thousand average democrats. In the second place, as I have just said, the intellectual aristocracy of this age and of every age, at least from the Reformation to the present hour, are and will for an indefinite period be in

ever-increasing proportion devoted to the maintenance in theory and in practice of absolute personal freedom in that part of life, ever larger and wider, in which personal interests are paramount, and yet more zealous for liberty of thought and its expression; and will face the gallows for their cause where the democracy would hardly face grape-shot and sabres."

"Even at the risk of being once more charged with claiming for Christianity what is due to other influences," interposed Vere, "I will venture to ask how much Christianity has contributed to this assertion of individual right, and independence of thought and life? In proportion as this individualism has been peremptory and powerful tenacious and persistent, it has been founded on religion. Men were willing to die for the rights of conscience long before they had realized any relation between the authority of conscience and the right of free-thought. The early Christians were the first among the subjects of the Roman empire who dared maintain at peril of life and limb that there existed duties paramount to the claims of the State, and rights with which Cæsar himself could not and should not be allowed to interfere. I do not deny that there was a time when all the authority of the Church was employed against freedom of opinion. But those were the times when the Church had passed through ascendancy into corruption; and even then there was within the pale of the Church herself infinitely more diversity of thought and expression than is commonly supposed. The rivalry of different orders, of national ecclesiastical organizations, of distinct schools of casuistry, kept alive the tradition of personal independence

and responsibility, the free exercise of intellect—within limits wide enough as a rule for the aspirations and the knowledge of the age,—when these could hardly have found room in the rough conflict of physical force which was going on outside. If, again, the Reformation gave—as the comparative condition, moral and material, of Catholic and Protestant countries shows that it did give—a tremendous and hitherto unchecked impulse to individualism, and liberated the forces by which political and material progress is stimulated and facilitated, it was because, in the first instance, it revived the religious sense of individual responsibility, the rights and obligations of the individual conscience. True that each conflicting sect asserted—not the universal right of free private judgment, which was long regarded by all save the Quakers as a pestilent and dangerous heresy,—but simply its own right to hold its own, and if possible to destroy every other opinion. The practical effect of this conflict was nevertheless to enhance almost indefinitely the activity and independence of the human mind, first in the theological sphere, then in almost every other department of thought. Those Puritan bigots who were even more eager to hang and flog Quakers and Catholics than to assert their own right against the Church of England, whether in the pillory or on the battle-field, were, much against their own will, but by an inevitable sequence which even then acute intelligence might have foreseen, the parents of that modern nonconformity which asserts the liberty of the individual conscience as the highest of human rights; and even of that much more audacious free-thought which modern Noncon-

formists would very probably, had they full and unrestrained control of the civil and ecclesiastical power, repress with fire and sword."

"Yes," replied Merton, "I am not at all inclined to deny that humanity, even the humanity of the far future, owes, and always must owe, very much to men whose views were even narrower and lower than the conservative convictions of their time, but being contrary thereto, by their mere revolt shook those convictions, and opened way for the ideas which are now gaining ground and for those juster ideas which will ultimately prevail. Now, we may have hereafter teachers who will be to Comte what Comte was to Luther, or Luther to the Mediæval confessors who effected the conversion of the barbarian conquerors of Rome; or, again, what these very probably were to the Christians of the second century. Humanity no doubt will always owe a great debt to Jesus Christ as well as to Mahomet, to Zoroaster, to Moses. But it is always the fate of the later followers of every great teacher to turn his system against his principles, and to resist the progress of the present in the name of that which was high and noble progress in the past. It is not because we now discern the brightest hopes and some of the most distinctive principles on which Jesus Christ insisted to be mere dreams that we should therefore depreciate the service which he and the Apostles rendered to the cause of human advancement and civilization; or even that which the bigotry of their successors, much less intelligent for the most part than their heathen persecutors, also unconsciously rendered to the same cause. But neither should we at this day

allow any gratitude for those services or any respect for the dreams associated with them to delay the onward movement for which our age is prepared; or even doubt that we can now dispense with everything we see to have been fiction—however useful, however indispensable that fiction may once have been, when it gave force and life to the partial truth with which it was associated.”

“I can understand,” said Vere, “though I understand it with much pain, the tendency of men educated solely in material science, who assert the claims of physical demonstration as paramount if not exclusive in all the domain of thought whereon they do not forbid reason to enter, to regard as mere dreams the most valuable and the most cherished of the lessons of our Divine Master. What does somewhat surprise me is the tendency of these destructives, in the midst of their energetic negations of all in the faith of the past that does not admit of demonstration, to dream for themselves dreams much less glorious and certainly not more in accordance with their own rules and principles. The idea of a glorified future humanity has no real basis in history or in science, no better or more solid foundation than may be claimed for the spiritual glorification of humanity beyond the grave promised—I should say not only promised but proved—by the Author of our faith. Nay, grave scientific exception might be taken to the possibility of such progress as Positivism in its dreams or visions of the future aspires to realize on earth. Their aspirations are subject to the conditions of terrestrial life, conditions which are to a great extent fixed, and of which we know not a little;

and I think that from a very few ascertained facts it would not be difficult to indicate a sure and not very distant limit to the development of human happiness on earth. Those extra-terrestrial dreams of which Positivism speaks so contemptuously were or are to be realized elsewhere under conditions of which we know and are told little or nothing. Science cannot afford anything that deserves to be called evidence that the Christian Heaven is impossible. I am strongly convinced, and I incline to think we might by careful and accurate investigation demonstrate, that the terrestrial Paradise of Materialism is literally and distinctly incapable of realization."

"And why?" said Merton.

"Because," replied Vere, "in the first instance, you cannot get rid of death or of the separation which death must always involve and which increases indefinitely in painfulness as men learn to suppose it final. You may say that when science has purified the human frame from the seeds of inherited weakness and disease death itself will seldom be a misfortune: that it will not come till life has ceased to be worth having. Considering the liability to death by horrible accident in the prime of life,—which as yet civilization has extended and rendered a more serious element in our prospects as it has subjected to human control forces of tremendous power which only the most careful and perfect vigilance can keep in check, and which, do what we will, are always apt at some unforeseen moment to rebel with terrific effect,—I think that even this statement might be challenged. But—admitting that as a general rule death will in your Paradise come only when it has ceased to

be really an evil, only to men and women who have gradually lost the power of enjoying life—death is an evil rather through the fear it inspires than through the pain it inflicts. The necessity of parting with life at some future time must always be regarded with horror and aversion so long as life is active within us. It must sadden and darken the brightness of youth and manhood, and sadden them more and more as men become more and more intelligent and thoughtful, and lose therefore that power of forgetting the necessity and certainty of death which at present they share so largely with all the brutes. It will not render this terrible certainty more agreeable, that death will be preceded by a gradual loss of all that is now pleasantest and dearest to us in life. The extreme brevity of human existence on earth must always render it unsatisfactory, must always embitter its sweetest pleasures, and hang as it were a sword over the head of the banqueter whose table Providence, fortune, chance, or human ingenuity has spread with the richest and the most various dainties that earth can afford. The man of twenty or thirty, with all the passion, the energy, the power of enjoyment, that belong to healthful youth fresh within him, can never be content to think that this cannot possibly last for fifty years and will assuredly be impaired within thirty. The keener and truer his thought, the less his power to forget what he knows on the most important of all subjects, the more terrible will appear this certain and speedy termination to his joys, this cruel brevity of life, intense in exact proportion to that enhancement of life's pleasures which you dream of effecting. Again, the limited space on the earth's surface, taken together

with the rapid power of multiplication possessed by man in common with other animals, must in a comparatively short time—especially should you realize your dreams of putting down war, pestilence, and even disease,—crowd every part of the world; perhaps not sufficiently to render food scarce or difficult to procure, but certainly too closely for the taste or comfort of men caring much for privacy. And however you may fancy that the development of the brain would diminish the multiplying power, so long as each generation exceeds the last in numbers—and this I presume it must always do—the date of that overcrowding which will involve actual want is but a question of time, and of no distant time. Again, while young and old live together and love each other—and assuredly did they cease to do so, half the brightness and worth of life would be taken away—the certainty and frequent experience of separations believed to be final must be sufficient of itself to darken the brightest homes with constant fear and frequent agony."

"Another point," said Cleveland, "deserves a passing notice. It is hardly conceivable that you can make life equally bright and pleasant for all, when you have cultivated all up to a point higher than that which the highest of us have yet reached. No refined cultivated family, keenly enjoying all the luxuries physical and mental that life can give, will be content to do for themselves all the domestic labour necessary to surround them with even as much of refinement and luxury as they now possess; and one of the least improbable elements of your dream is such an equalization of human conditions as shall render domestic service almost if not

quite unattainable. I might insist on this single point, that the happiness of life as now enjoyed by the rich and the refined depends, and must always depend, in large measure on the ministration of assistants less cultivated, or at all events less wealthy, and that an essential condition of your Paradise is that of such assistance there shall no longer be a supply. I believe that the present inequality of conditions is so compensated by difference of tastes and of refinement that—so long as sufficient food and clothing are secured and each person falls into that occupation or position for which inheritance and education have fitted him—enjoyment is distributed with tolerable fairness. The refined and sensitive no doubt get a far larger share of pleasure than those of lower and grosser organization, but at the same time they suffer far more pain. Taking not individuals but classes, and looking to their inward constitution as well as to their outward circumstances, I believe firmly that on the whole—want and the fear of want apart—rich and poor, masters and servants, are equally well off, and equally contented. I can therefore reconcile existing inequalities with my full belief in the goodness and justice of the Creator; at any rate more easily than I can reconcile with those qualities the vast inequalities in the scale of animal creation, infinitely greater than any that exists among men, and presenting this peculiarity, that the lowest organizations, those which enjoy least, are infinitely the more numerous; while half the more sensitive animal world passes its life in a condition of constant alarm or at least of constant vigilance, and is destined in a large majority of cases to serve as food to creatures little

superior in organization or capacity of enjoyment. But I see and confess distinctly that the Paradise of Positivism, while it may permit a difference of political rank, will allow no wide difference of fortune, and will probably in some centuries extinguish distinctions of hereditary sensitiveness and suitability to different station. Then I fear that to those who now enjoy life most keenly, who would feel that they were wasting their time and their powers in necessary but unpleasant tasks, the earth would be less agreeable than it is at present. I might add further objections to Vere's list; but I think it is enough to indicate the number of points at which a check, if not an insuperable barrier, is opposed to the indefinite improvement of human life upon this earth. You may render the existence of the millions better and brighter than it is now; you can never render a terrestrial life, without hope of anything beyond the grave, a real Paradise. You can in fact do little or nothing to create a happiness greater in kind or degree than that which is now enjoyed by those who combine the privileges of health, wealth, intellect and good spirits—that, for instance, of my own present life."

"Of course," answered Merton, "we must purchase any great amelioration in the condition of the poor by sacrifices, real or nominal, on the part of the rich. Any real improvement in the material, perhaps in the moral, condition of the Many means a rise direct or indirect, real as well as nominal, in the price of labour. I put aside for the present the question whether the commercial employers as a class would suffer greatly thereby, though I think nearly all economists are agreed that, cost of production remaining fixed, or rather being the

principal element in price, the public of purchasers and consumers will not in an age of competition submit to any increase in that margin of profit which pays the wages of labour, the interest of capital, and the expense of superintendence. So that, this margin remaining what it is or tending to become narrower, every addition to the labourer's share must be made at the expense of the capitalist, or of the adventurer who employs the capital if it be not his own. But certainly every rise in the real remuneration of labour must increase the cost of domestic service and so diminish the comfort of the rich. Your last objection therefore to our hopes is an objection to all improvement, an objection to hopes professed, if not in equal degree yet with equal distinctness, by Conservatives and Liberals alike."

"Scarcely," said Cleveland. "A very large proportion of the domestic service now employed by the educated classes could be dispensed with without wasting any portion of their time in domestic duties or seriously affecting their comfort. A change compelling them to dispense with this amount of service would merely improve the condition of the workers without exacting from the employer anything but greater simplicity of life. It is only when you come to something like real widespread equality, that domestic service becomes either unattainable or intolerably bad—as it is now in Australia and parts of America. It is only then that the welfare of the intellectual minority is seriously affected, or that society loses greatly, by obliging them to spend a considerable part of their time on functions in which their intelligence is wasted, and to which that of

inferior minds is better adapted. Your Paradise of equality would compel the community to pay for silver instruments, and use up one-fourth or one-third of their value in doing the work of iron, and probably doing it very badly. However, I do not suppose that Vere would care seriously to insist upon this part of his argument. His real point, and it is a very strong one, is that, whereas a spiritual Paradise is conceivable, the unalterable conditions of material life on earth render a terrestrial Paradise visibly and demonstrably impossible."

"I deny it," said Sterne. "If human creatures regard with horror the prospect of death, coming as an euthanasia at the end of a life enjoyed till enjoyment is no longer possible, it is through superstition and traditional habit. I do not wholly share the hopes of men like Merton, certainly I do not expect that they will be realized through that awful despotism of scientific intelligence on which Positivism rests its anticipations. But in justice to all of whatever sect who, limiting their hopes to this life, believe that this life can be greatly improved, you must remember that with religion we expect to get rid of a great variety of mischiefs connected therewith. We expect to educate, first, the civilized races, gradually the entire human family, to look at life from the beginning to the end in a purely reasonable point of view. So regarded, the fact that it is terminable and brief will be accepted with the calmness with which we always accept the inevitable and universal; and life, even for some fifty years of real activity and enjoyment, will be worth having, especially when its

termination is no longer surrounded with superstitious terrors; when men have ceased to expect serious physical pain and misery in parting with existence, and equally ceased to look for a future of uncongenial brilliancy on the one hand, or of intolerable horror and torment on the other. As matter of fact, we know that the great majority of men have always *practically* regarded death as the end of a state which they enjoy and to which they cling, rather than in the light in which theologians represent it, as a passage from one state to another. The Greeks, for example, looked forward, if they looked beyond the grave at all, to a Hades utterly devoid of anything they could prefer to annihilation; yet as a race they seem to have enjoyed this life intensely. They certainly did not feel that it was darkened and saddened, as you put it, by the impending sword of death, though with them death might be expected to occur at any moment. And when material science has done its best for mankind, death, save at the end of a life whose joys are thoroughly exhausted, will be so exceptional as scarcely to enter into human calculation."

"You forget, I fear," said Gerard, "one distinction between the joys of sceptical races in the past and your scientific thoughtful cultivated rational race of the future. In proportion as men are governed by instinct rather than by reason, they are able to cast off the burden of fear and even that of painful future certainties. If a people whose enjoyment of life depended chiefly on physical conditions—prominent among which were vigorous health a delightful climate and an inspiring atmosphere—were happy, it was because they

were able to forget—save in exceptional moments—the ultimate certainty and the constant probability of annihilation. There are men—I suspect a majority of men—who regard annihilation with intense horror, to whom the prospect of annihilation would darken the brightest hours of life if the thought were constantly or frequently present. In my youth I was myself one of these ; and, unable to satisfy myself that a future life was probable, I consulted one of the wisest and most experienced of those among my elders who entertained views much resembling my own. The only practical counsel he could give me was—since nothing I could do or think out was likely to relieve my mind on the one hand, or to affect my actual future on the other—to forget death altogether. Such advice would, I think, be as useless to a Materialist trained by the education of the future, as it would be unworthy of a thoroughgoing Positivist teacher. When men are firmly convinced that within a given time they will be annihilated, while at the same time they regard annihilation with that intense horror which I think must attach to all keen enjoyment, and especially all keen intellectual enjoyment, of life, the thought cannot but be one of intense pain : and the very vividness of vital power, the zest of earthly pleasures will tend to remind them of it. Your highly cultured thoroughly rational Materialist will not be able to forget, and he will remember with unspeakable revulsion and reluctance, the certainty of a speedy termination of the life that is to be so pleasant.”

“I doubt,” said Sterne, “whether your argument, however sound it may appear, has much real value.

My own enquiries, and the experience of men who have studied the thought of others much more deeply than I, assures me that it is not by those who have keenly enjoyed life that death is most feared or a future existence most eagerly desired. On the contrary, it appears that in practice those who are most unwilling to part with existence are those who feel that they have not had their fair share in this world. To them, as Vauvenargues said, '*La mort comble l'adversité.*' When men of high intellect, gifted also with such advantages of fortune, health, and circumstances as have enabled them to drain to the dregs the sweetest cup of healthful pleasure that human life can present, reach an age at which the energy of youth has been lost and the work of manhood is completed, they accept the brevity of life or of existence as a natural and not unwelcome fact. They have had enough of it. It has given them all it can give, and they would hardly care to enjoy it over again."

"The first inference," said Vere, "that I should draw from such experiences would be that of the Preacher—'*Vanity of vanities.*' The cup which no one cares to drain again cannot have been very sweet, or must have been found poisonous; and even if your renovated and regenerated humanity could really make the most of this life and not wish to recommence it, it must be that life terrestrial without a future is not worth having."

"I," interposed Cleveland, "should put an entirely different interpretation on the experiences to which Sterne refers. It is precisely because the energy of youth is gone, because the capacity to enjoy keenly is exhausted, because in fact your examples are taken

from a class of men weary alike of work and pleasure, that they regard the promise of a future existence, and would regard even the renewal of this, as so slight a boon. Give them back for one hour the vigour and the keen susceptibility they once possessed, and they would be even more eager than youths who have not known what life can give, to perpetuate or renew it."

"Possibly," replied Merton. "But the mere fact that experience does destroy or greatly diminish all desire for renewed life would put down the terror of death among people educated to regard the whole question rationally and coolly."

"Not at all," answered Cleveland. "We all know that as matter of fact the dying seldom regard death with terror or even with reluctance. But this does not reconcile us while in health to the necessity of death. We are as anxious to keep our power of enjoying life as to retain life itself. As your experienced men cannot realize again the feelings with which they entered on life, and the zest with which they enjoyed it; so the young, whether of the present or of some infinitely improved generation, will not be able to realise the state of mind which regards annihilation with contentment; and the more delightful you render their life, the further into age you prolong its value, the deeper will be the shadow which the certainty of speedy annihilation must cast over it. Remember, as you have been so often reminded, that your training, whatever else it may do, will render men less and less capable of forgetting the primary fundamental facts and conditions of existence. Of these death is one of the most important; perhaps *the* most essential, since nothing

can affect more deeply the character of life than its duration. The more therefore you intensify, prolong, and extend the joy of existence, and the more successfully you train mankind to regard it thoughtfully and rationally, the more permanent, the more ever-present, and the more horrible will be the thought of its speedy and certain termination."

"I should wish again," said Vere, "to interpose one of those moral considerations to which Materialism is so averse. If this life be but a training for another, or for eternity; if even it be but a part of such training, its arrangement is consistent and intelligible. No really thoughtful and observant man can, as I think, carefully regard all he sees and knows of life from a moral standpoint without perceiving that from first to last it is a course of education and discipline. Materialism might explain the purpose of such discipline and training if it ended early in middle-life while the work, at least the most important and influential work, of manhood has yet to be done. It would then be such an education given by Providence or Nature, as we all strive to give to our children. But as matter of fact it goes on almost if not quite to the end. No part of it is more important or more impressive than that derived from the actual work of life, the experiences of mature manhood. Our Providential education certainly does not reach its culmination, to say nothing of its completion, till our children are grown up, and the best part of our life-work done. When our part is played out, we are in everything but energy stronger than in youth, wiser, fitter for the work even of this life; and, if only we have accepted instead of rebelling against Providen-

tial teaching, we are better in character and disposition than when at thirty or thereabouts we took our place among those by whom the actual work of the world was to be carried on. The discipline is a painful one; and if it is not to be utilized, the pain seems cruel and wanton. Yet methinks it cannot to any considerable extent be utilized here. It does not profit future generations to any degree commensurate with the care bestowed upon it or the suffering generally inflicted; for the young are and always will be partly unwilling, partly unable to assimilate the experience and the wisdom of age. It does not affect posterity through direct inheritance, because, as I have pointed out, the best part of our life-education has scarcely more than begun when our youngest children are born. It is, moreover, so intensely personal in its nature, so distinctly directed to cure our own faults, to complete and purify our individual characters, that we can hardly suppose it intended mainly for the benefit of others, even were it possible that they should largely profit thereby. Nothing, then, but a future existence can render the moral discipline of this life, in that personal aspect under which many of us feel compelled to regard it, consistent and reasonable in its general tendency; nothing else can furnish it with an adequate object. On the other hand the reasonableness, wisdom, consistency of its details are such as to render the idea that it is in general purposeless and aimless simply incredible to those who really appreciate its nature."

"I will grant," rejoined Sterne, "that Providence, and especially Providential relations with and training of individual men, are ideas not usually reconcilable with

disbelief in immortality. But you must remember that the Materialist recognises neither the one nor the other."

"Of course not," said Vere. "But my point is that, whether believing in Providence or not, whether Atheist or Christian, every thoughtful man, carefully noting his own experience and that of others, must recognise a moral training in life, even if he refuse or fail to discern either a teacher, or a purpose to which the moral training is to be applied. Now, if once the existence and persistence throughout our earthly life of such a moral training and discipline be recognised, it affords, in the first place, powerful evidence of Providential Government, and, in the next place, almost irresistible moral evidence of a future life; since its cohesion, consistency, and direct application to personal character forbid us as reasonable creatures to suppose that it is purposeless or simply wasted. Its character seems to indicate a personal direction: its value requires a future existence in which its lessons may be applied."

"I cannot say," replied Merton, "that I have ever recognised a moral training so distinct and definite, so persistent and prolonged, as to imply either a teacher or a personal object. But of course as a Materialist my attention has not been directed like yours to the evidences, real or fanciful, that a study of life from this ethical standpoint might furnish. I can, however, perfectly conceive a moral training of one generation for the benefit of the next applied by Nature to the elevation of the human race, in the same manner in which the principle of development has been applied to the animal creation; even though I fail as yet, even though collective science still fails, to see anything in

the one case like the sanction and enforcement which Natural Selection gives to development in the other. But I think we are wandering from our point, which was the dependence of practical morality upon theology. The higher forms of Materialism do, as you are well aware, claim at least to apply the principles of religion to the formation of habits which, as conducing to the general welfare of mankind, deserve to be called moral; and to give to these a sanction religious if not supernatural."

"Yes," said Cleveland. "Following your master Comte, whether you acknowledge him or not, you endeavour to steal from Theism or Christianity all its most attractive elements and all its strongest sanctions, none of which would ever have entered into the mind of a Materialist had Christianity or other forms of Theism never existed. The very fact that you steal them, or try to steal them, proves their enormous value. You yourselves, their bitter enemies, their declared despisers, are forced to confess their indispensable unequalled power by striving to borrow their influence, even while you repudiate their foundation and dilute their real meaning to a mere metaphorical shadow. You tell us of an immortality in which there is no trace of personal existence, no survival of consciousness, no share even by way of contemplation in the happiness for which we are to sacrifice our own, no reward whatever for the devotion of the present to a future whereof we can know nothing. You picture a heaven on earth which we shall not see, and which for us, to our consciousness, will never be realized; and you fancy that you can substitute this for a heaven

wherein we ourselves may have our place, and in which every duty faithfully done on earth will find not merely a distinct reward but that best of all personal rewards, an elevation of our own nature which will help us to rise higher and higher through all Eternity. You forbid us to hope that we may witness the good things we have laboured to achieve for others; we must forego not only the gratification of seeing those we personally loved and lived for owing eternal happiness to the benefits of which God allowed us to be the instruments, but even the poorer colder satisfaction of knowing that remote generations *are* the better for our toils and sacrifices. You give us an object of worship and aspiration in a glorified perfected collective Humanity whereof we ourselves shall not even be members—which I again say will for us have no existence, since we can never know anything about it; and you expect that this metaphor, for it is no better, will do for future generations all that the direct conscious personal obedience and loyalty we owe to a personal perfectly wise and just Creator has done for us and for our forefathers. The mere fact that you chose to express anti-religious theories in language borrowed from religion, that your cleverest and most effective writers are those who most constantly and closely adapt their real thoughts to a language which for them is unreal and unnatural, proves what incalculable importance you yourselves in your own despite attach to the influences which in words you affirm to be worthless and impotent."

"No," rejoined Merton. "We accept all that is good and true in these influences, I might say all that is unselfish therein, and merely set aside a foundation

which as we believe has been created by human imagination to account for the existence of these influences."

"There is," interposed Gerard, "one element in the idea of immortality, generally overlooked, the utter disappearance of which from the heart would be a heavy loss to some natures, and these the most sensitive and sorely tried. I have known many whose character and temper has been spoilt, whose life has been utterly embittered, by a sense of injustice and ingratitude endured from the world—or worse, from those they most dearly loved therein. And such men have said that this injustice would be simply intolerable, might provoke them to lasting resentment and to renunciation of all ties and all duties, but for the hope, often very faint, of a fair trial before an impartial and infallible Judge. They wish that their conduct should be vindicated and their motives understood; perhaps, perplexed and harassed till their judgment fails them, they wish to be assured less of their innocence than of the truth, be that what it may. 'I expect,' one friend said to me, 'to be condemned: I am quite willing to accept my sentence, whatever it may be; but I do wish to have a fair and impartial hearing. To plead *here* would be mere waste of time, even if my pride could stoop to it. If I were finally and absolutely convinced that I should *never* be fairly judged, never cleared from the calumnies and misapprehensions that have ruined my life, I am afraid I should throw up the effort to do justice to others, and try to forget in distant regions and in personal indulgence the misery of which I am consciously undeserving. Failing in this, there remains always one certain cure; and to that cure men who have no religious misgiving

as to its legitimacy are with constantly increasing frequency enticed or driven.'”

“I repeat,” said Cleveland, after a brief pause, “that immortality in the sense, or nonsense, wherein the word is used by Positivists and Materialists is a metaphor, not to say a fiction, of which you would never have made use but for its associations with the idea of a real substantial personal existence beyond the grave: an idea which has for ages exercised a most powerful influence on the thought and action of mankind; but in which you have no right, on which you are lawless trespassers. I repeat that Humanity present or future is no real existence, but a name for a collection of human beings individually contemptible, and in no possible aspect worthy of reverence from us who are to ennoble and glorify it; a fantastic idea towards which worship is simply impossible and unmeaning. As to the selfishness you impute to Christianity, and to Theism in so far as Theism involves the belief in immortality, it is simply that element which gives to the Christian Heaven and the personal Deity that substantial reality (or realism) of which your metaphorical objects of hope and worship, your glorified Humanity and your terrestrial Paradise, are utterly devoid. Personal immortality is no less essential to those who are most perfectly free from a shadow of selfish motive. Suppose a man—and such men are conceivable at least, if not real—willing to forego his own share of Heaven for the sake of others. Still he would need immortality, or at least a future existence, in order to know that the object of his sacrifice was realized; that those he would never see again had

nevertheless attained that joy, that future progress, which he had purchased for them at so high a price. Similarly the personal Creator alone can command personal loyalty. We owe no allegiance to a posterity, however improved and however happy, so remote that we can scarcely feel interest in it; which has done nothing for us, and which in truth is to receive everything from us—is to be glorified by our own services, in order that we may worship not its reality but our anticipation thereof. Such miserable unreal empty imaginings of shapeless shadows do not acquire authority or influence because you attach to them names and attributes that have for those who believe in their proper meaning a supreme authority and an infinite value. But by confessing the necessity of some object of worship you acknowledge how deep, how all-important, is the actual influence of a belief in the Divine existence and personality over human action and character. By imagining a scientific Paradise on earth and borrowing for it all the epithets attached to a real Heaven, you do, unconsciously but most practically, confess how deep is the influence even on your own imaginations of that Heaven which you insist cannot, or ought not to, influence us."

"I might ask you, Cleveland," said Vere, "whether your own argument might not be turned against you; whether much of what you justly say in disparagement of Materialism and Positivism as compared with Theism might not be said in disparagement of Theism itself as compared with Christianity? Its Heaven is too uncertain both in its existence and its elements to influence any but the most vivid imagination. Your God is too

remote from humanity, His personality too indistinct and inconceivable to attract, save from a few exceptional natures, anything like the enthusiasm which almost any human creature can feel for a God Incarnate in a human frame, possessing human feelings, leading a life of sacrifice, and dying a death of torture for His fellow-men."

"I grant it," answered Cleveland. "The Materialists scarcely venture to conjecture at what time the theories of Comte may furnish a possible religion or effective morality for an improved posterity. Still less do I, not possessed by the intellectual arrogance and sectarian partisanship of Positivism, pretend to anticipate the time when all mankind shall be able to worship and obey an invisible Creator, and trust to Him for all the possible happiness of a Heaven, for all the punishments of a Hell not described by any Revelation. I will only remind you that Monotheism of a strong and even passionate temper existed for ages before Christ, and exists still in Islam; that the Jews from the time of David, certainly from that of the Maccabees, to the present, have been able to worship an invisible Jehovah, and have been satisfied with the hopes of pure Theism, as regards anything beyond the very vague rewards and punishments promised in the Old Testament, and nowhere therein definitely located beyond the grave. But Christianity no doubt will last till its work is done; in the meantime I repeat what I said not long ago, when most of you were present: that I should shrink, in the present state of human thought, from doing anything to weaken its influence. There is, and always will remain this distinction between Theism and Positivism,

that belief in a real God [generally in a true Heaven and Hell] does control through its own influences, unindebted to any other creed, the lives of thousands; whereas not a single Positivist, and scarcely any Secularist, however practical and limited his belief, can find comfort, solace, or control therein without borrowing not only his moral code but all its sanctions and all its energies either from Theism or from Christianity. There are thousands who like myself recognise simply and absolutely the indefeasible claim of Supreme Wisdom to our unqualified obedience and unhesitating trust. Confident that they can never have cause to doubt the judgment or object to the purposes of our Commander-in-chief, men the sadness and darkness of whose lives painfully contrasts my own are content to fight and to suffer, enduring to the end; abiding—under no matter what temptations to desertion or mutiny—at the post in which He has placed them, however intolerable its conditions, however perplexing or seeming impracticable its duties; asking only light to perform them—not even, like Ajax, light wherein to die. We are content, if, in good or evil, we can read enough for our own guidance, though nine-tenths of the orders be written in a language of which we are ignorant, or, still worse, in a language which simply perplexes us. It would be enough for the most sorely-tried of these my comrades if, though knowing nothing of the pay or punishment we may receive hereafter, though often unable to understand those we receive here, we only knew that there *is* a Future where our Commander will—as He alone can—do perfect justice at last. The utmost we could think ourselves entitled to ask is

simply an assurance that we shall be permitted to report ourselves at the last Court-Martial, and there to learn how far we have done our duty; refusing absolutely and always to admit the authority of any other tribunal over our consciences and our conduct, and satisfied with whatever sentence we may there receive; as little disposed to canvass its probable nature as to discuss the reasons that have governed the dispositions on which our own particular place in this world depends, and of which we can see no more than a single sentinel of lines extending over half a province. Gerard was right in saying that this assurance of final justice, of a final acceptance or rejection by Supreme Wisdom, is the need most deeply felt by those who are conscious, with Rabbi Ben Ezra, that

‘ This world hath been harsh and strange ;
Something is wrong ; there needeth a change, ’

yet do not on that account desire to remit their vigilance or renounce their allegiance. It is for those whose life is not merely unhappy but unfair—who are conscious of good service unrecognized, of errors natural and perhaps inevitable in a hard position cruelly punished, of honour stained unjustly, perhaps of self-respect wounded and crushed—that the thought of a life where *all* the secrets of the heart are known is a thought of almost unalloyed hope and comfort: and what these would do without it, men to whom, as to myself, this world is gracious and this life rich in enjoyment and full of peace, can hardly imagine. But this at any-rate we all can see and feel; that after religion, the influence that does most to hold us to duty and

strengthen us against temptation is that of human and especially of domestic love. But—if affection have no future and its loss no solace, if every death-bed parting be final, must not that love speedily wither in the bitter frost of an universal conviction that in cool selfishness and profound indifference alone can we find defensive armour against ever-threatening peril, or anæsthetic against intolerable pain? What, in a world governed by such a conviction, will be the doom of the weak—of women and of children? What bonds will hold society together, and distinguish the life of men from that of wolves?”

There was a pause—neither Sterne nor Merton cared to answer such a question, asked by one whose well-known doubts gave it a sad and serious significance. At last Vere rose to depart, and rising, said:

“Extremes meet, Cleveland; and profound scepticism bears witness to the truth of Faith’s deepest lessons. Doubt and even disbelief bring you, and those who have learnt them in a harder school than yours, back to the point from which Christianity took its departure—an intense, immovable conviction of the worthlessness of a present that knows no future. The happiest sceptic I ever knew finds a life ending in the grave scarcely better than it seems to the saddest; the sunniest side of human experience reflects the lore learnt in its darkest shadows. ‘Vanity of vanities’ is the summary of an earthly existence which has been as full of honourable service as of innocent enjoyment: you who have tasted and relished all that is best in life material and intellectual, no less than he who has

drained the cup of sorrow and suffering to the dregs, can only re-echo the testimony of the arch-Apostle, 'What advantageth it us, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'"

THE END.