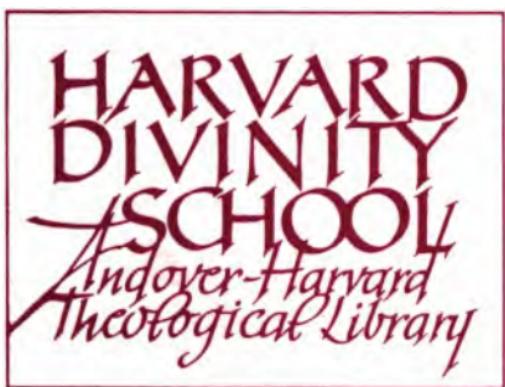


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PAUPERISM

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AND

CRIME.

William Loggins

BY W. L. FISHER.

"The right use of riches is more commendable than that of arms. And not to desire them at all, more glorious than to use them well."

LIFE OF CORIOLANUS.

Philadelphia:
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.

FOR SALE BY CAREY & HART, AND J. GRIGGS;—G. & C. & J.
CARVILL, NEW-YORK;—AND CARTER, HENDER, & BABCOCK,
BOSTON.

1831.

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TO

JOSEPH TUCKERMAN,

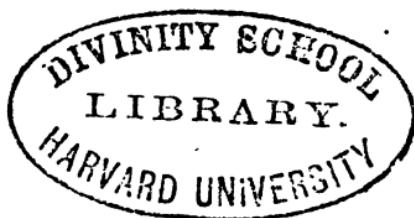
BOSTON,

THE POOR MAN'S FRIEND,

AND TO EACH INDIVIDUAL READER,

THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED,

BY THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

THE following pages were written during the severe weather of the late winter, when the sufferings of the poor became so interesting a subject of enquiry.

Independent minds will not be displeased with an unreserved expression of private sentiments, which have no sinister object in view, no preconcerted opinion to establish, no desire to control the free exercise of individual judgment.

I impugn neither the motives nor philanthropy of those who may differ from me, and can only ask, that the positions I have taken, may be examined, condemned, or approved, in the spirit of candour in which they have been written.

Wakefield, Phila. County. 1831.

P A U P E R I S M .

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THE ARGUMENT :—The wealth of nations being limited, if any engross an unreasonable share it results in distress to others—England—Ireland—Saving Labour Machinery—Agriculture—Commerce—Idleness—Education—New England Temperance Societies—those for the Encouragement of Faithful Domestics—luxury—public opinion—individual reformation.

THE increase of pauperism and crime in a greater relative ratio than that of general population, is a subject of interest to every reflective mind.* I have classed them toge-

* In reviewing the progress of this society through many years, the number that have since been formed for the same benevolent purpose, and the general spirit of philanthropy, which is continually devising various means for alleviating the sufferings of the poor, we are brought to the discouraging conclusion, that, notwithstanding all these efforts, the evil increases in a greater ratio than even the increase of population of the country will account for. It is beyond the power of the Board to account for this melancholy result, although the experience of the Managers might suggest some causes, as the source of much of the suffering they are called to witness. But in this spirit-stirring enterprising age, calling for labourers in every department of active business, when in the private circle, there is a constant and increasing demand for respectable, trust-worthy domestics; when the present style of living employs a greater number of persons than formerly, when wages are as high, and every article of real necessity is as cheap as at any former period, there must be some hidden, deep-rooted evil continually operating to produce the misery that presents itself for relief.—*Extract from the Report of the Female Association—Poulson's Daily Advertiser, March 17th, 1831.*

1 *

ther, because the same causes sometimes contribute to both; yet they are not necessarily connected. Many estimable and pious people become objects of charity; many crimes are committed by such as are above want.

I am aware that the subject is apparently of great intricacy—Involving many interests, many plans of reformation. Simplify it, consider it in detail, not in the mass, and it is easily unraveled.

Societies are formed for relief with the most benevolent intentions; plans for education are adopted and enforced; houses for public worship, so called, are built; ministers are increased; Bibles and tracts are circulated without number; still, the evil increases; and it will be so, while the causes remain untouched!

There appears to be sufficient wealth in each state and country, to raise all above pauperism, and to make every one easy and happy in their circumstances. In this conviction, which will probably be believed by every mind, I might rest my argument, that a too great individual monopoly is the cause of pauperism in every country; and facts will support my theory, that its increase or decrease is in reference thereto!

Nations have their economy as well as individuals, which can not be violated with impunity. We require no Agrarian laws, nor

an equal division of property. Nature has given to some districts greater resources than to others, and there is no evidence that such a division would add to the general happiness.

It is true that the plan has been adopted, both nationally and in smaller communities, as it is said, with success; but it is also true, that greater relative comfort has existed under other circumstances, where men have been more left to individual responsibility.

To avoid the distresses of society, that harmony must be maintained, which in the animal economy, preserves each part in its proper place, and thus enables it to contribute to the good of the whole.

The amount of population which a country will sustain, strictly speaking, can only be limited by its ability to produce the necessities of life; this not being alike in all, one nation will naturally be richer and sustain more inhabitants than another; and the inequality of individual wealth, may vary in each in proportion thereto, without derangement to the social order; but in all countries, where it exceeds, in any considerable degree, a proper ratio in reference to the whole, the body becomes diseased and distress prevails.

Wealth, depends not on the ability of the country, but on the demand for its industry. The tobacco crop of the United States has

varied to a great extent in different years; yet it has been demonstrated, that the nett proceeds of each has been nearly the same—the increased quantity has but lessened the price. So of cotton, when in about ten years, the quantity was extended from one to two hundred millions of pounds, there was no proportionate increase in the returns; and the farmer in the neighbourhood of this city, finds his potatoes varying in price from twenty to eighty cents per bushel, and often receives an equal return from a smaller as from a larger crop. The principle is a sound one, that over-production gives no wealth—though particular circumstances may change the aspect of the immediate effect. It can not be too clearly kept in view, that the wealth of every country is limited; and I argue, that so far as this is absorbed in too great a degree by individuals, pauperism must be the result. We could readily perceive, that a town with a thousand inhabitants, limited to a thousand barrels of flour and a thousand cords of wood for an annual supply, would experience distress, if a fifth or a twentieth part of the population were to engross half or three-fourths of the whole—and money is but the sign of these things, and generally much more limited than they. There is a ratio which may be taken by each without producing distress, and no more.

Without descending to the minor evils of society, which are mostly secondary in the production of poverty, it may be safely asserted, that while the master evil exists and is fostered by the popular opinions and spirit of the age, and by the artificial state of society in which we live, every attempt to lessen pauperism, or to ameliorate the condition of the poor, will be temporary and limited in its effects. The unreasonable monopoly of wealth by individuals, is the secret of its inordinate increase, and there is none other. And in proportion as each partakes in the cause, so is he violating laws essential for the well being of society, and lessening that harmony, which in every situation is essential to the happiness of man.

We hear of the prosperity of particular countries and districts, but it often only means, that a particular class of merchants, or manufacturers, or artizans, are pursuing a profitable business, and laying up money. There can be no real prosperity to a state, in any business how profitable soever it may be to particular men, which leads to derange its true political economy. If wealth is the most desirable attainment for a nation, this position may not be true; but if, as I suppose, the individual comfort of the common family is the object to be attained, any thing that impairs this, ought not to be considered prosperity, in

any true acceptation of the term, be the wealth ever so great.

I may be told of the increased circulation of money by wealthy individuals; but where they exact a profit disproportioned to the value of what they return to the community, all the supposed good results in a derangement of that social order which is the only basis of the true prosperity and happiness of society.

If, while ten persons are getting rich, as many, or ten times that number are becoming morally degraded, it will be readily believed, that the real prosperity of the country is not promoted; the more especially when it is considered, that the wealth of nations can not be arbitrarily increased, and that its accumulation in one place, or by one individual, is in general connected with its proportionate diminution elsewhere.

There are countries where the inhabitants are in a great degree the children of nature, in which there are no jails or poor houses, and in which pauperism does not exist. May we not hence reason *a priori*, that these evils follow the train of what is called civilization and refinement? I answer yes! and yet they are so far from being necessarily connected with it, that true and genuine refinement and civilization, ought to furnish effectual means of reformation and correction.

There are few, if any, paupers from choice; many are so philosophical as to need but little, and they desire no more: yet it may be presumed, that ~~each individual man~~ would prefer having the means of support, independent of the gratuitous aid of his fellow man. This appears to be a constituent part of our nature—and if the means of gratification were co-extensive with it, we should find an immediate decrease of pauperism and of moral offence.

Those wants which form a part of our organization, and the gratification of which afford so much enjoyment, are suffered to extend to the acquisition of much more than is required; and thus one man may dry up the means of a rational, independent existence, from hundreds of his fellow creatures.

It would be presumptuous to attempt, absolutely to decide for others; our constitutions, habits, associations, are so different, that it may be doubted, whether any particular limitation could be formed.

'The labourer who pays two dollars a week for his board, and obtains therefore his roast meat, tea and coffee, and blames the extravagance of those who spend more, may be reproached by such, as sustain themselves on soup and pone bread; and these in their turn, might be equally obnoxious to the censure of others, who, like the celebrated cynic philosopher, may choose to live in a tub, and throw

away their drinking bowls or gourds, because they have power to lap water like the dog.

While wealth is suffered to give so much consideration and importance to those who possess it, while it is connected so much with happiness, every means of acquisition will be sought, and drained to its last drop ; and that avaricious monopolizing spirit will prevail, which ultimately produces moral offences and pauperism.

There is no evidence, that one class of society indulges in this spirit more than any other—the rich more than the poor ; the one may feel it as much, in their circumscribed, as the other, in their enlarged circumstances ; but though the real virtue or vice should be the same, the moral or physical effect may be altogether different.

It is the various visible effects which I am considering. I am aware that every error, may presuppose an alienation from the purity of virtue ; but an equal separation may exist, and produce different moral results. Thus, it may be readily perceived, that that monopolizing spirit, which would be almost harmless in the poor, from its limited means of action, might be the cause of much oppression, as those were extended.

Labour is the primary means of wealth. We require food and clothing, and they are the produce of industry ; and yet there is

much labour which produces no wealth; that for luxury is of this character; it appears to produce it, while it only causes a change of ownership. www.libtool.com.cn

Man is formed for society, and an interchange with his neighbour constitutes an important part of his happiness—we have different affinities and capacities, individuals are particularly adapted to particular pursuits: thus one is naturally better qualified to cultivate the earth, others for mercantile or handicraft trades; and each is generally better performed, and with more ease to all concerned, than if individuals undertook to cultivate and manufacture every thing for themselves. While the farmer raises wheat and corn for the smith and the hatter, and these work equally for him, the hat and smith work, are as much the produce of the farmer's labour, as of the smith's and hatter's. On the proper equipoise of this system of the mutual exchange of labour, the harmony of society depends. As it is departed from, pauperism and moral offences, so far as these depend thereon, will prevail.

It must be evident that the quantity of labour required for all the wants of life, is limited. If it takes one day's work to make a hat, or to raise a bushel of wheat, and a million, or a hundred millions are wanted; these stand in the place of so many days work; and while

the farmer, the hatter, the tailor, or shoemaker, can exchange his day's work for the day's work of another, engaged in a different employment,¹ there is a perfect reciprocity between them. This is destroyed, as the labour of one becomes more or less valuable. If the day's work of the farmer will buy two of those of the hatter or tailor, he may hence appropriate to himself twice as much labour as he returns, and the equality is destroyed. If, however, the farmer does still his day's work, lives according to his means, buys twice as many shoes, and hats, and expends all his earnings, the reciprocity is still in some degree preserved—the same relative labour is required, and the only difference is, that the one is clothed in newer and finer apparel, and fares more sumptuously than the other.

If the farmer, instead of buying more clothing and faring more sumptuously, chooses to expend his surplus labour in employing the smith to polish his horse-shoes, his plough-irons, cart-tires, &c. the effect would be the same.—An expenditure of labour in useless work, by which, though the farmer would gain nothing, the smith would be benefited, yet in a far less degree, than if the farmer had employed his extra labour in quarrying stone, preparing timber, and building the blacksmith a house to live in. Even if the smith remained idle, while the farmer was thus

working for him there would be no loss—the one would gain as much and the other would lose no more. If the smith, instead of remaining idle, was to employ himself when the farmer was labouring for him, in works producing no substantial comfort, the effect would still be the same. It would be but transferring luxury from one to the other; but if the smith was to devote his time, relieved from building himself a house, to procuring those many comforts requisite to rational existence, and should thus place himself more above mendicity, the moral condition of the world would be improved; if not, the responsibility would rest with himself, and be removed from the farmer, who had done his part—all that he could do to prevent want. Work does not necessarily include manual labour; the judge who administers justice, or the physician relief, may be as usefully employed, as those who labour with their hands; but when any amass an undue proportion of wealth, it is to be atoned for, either by its gratuitous distribution among the poor, and which may be done in various ways; or, luxury comes in as a medium to cure the disease; and ultimately, families with accumulated sufferings, are reduced to the general level. The evil would here cease, but that as one loses, another gains the ascen-

dency, and suffering is thus perpetuated to the poor.

If there are ten millions of hats required for the use of these United States, and an hundred persons, by hoarding up wealth, or by that which has been accumulated by others, can engross the manufacture, they must hold command over all the labour necessary to make them. While this labour is well paid for, there is no pauperism: but in the spirit of money making, each one, in the prospect of an increase of wealth, multiplies the number of his hats, a quantity exceeding the demand is produced, a reduction of price follows, and immediately a reduction in the value of labour; some are thrown out of employ and distress and pauperism prevail.

It may be true that a thousand hat manufacturers might be as likely to create surplus as a hundred; but in proportion as particular establishments are extended, it becomes difficult to stop them. No one can doubt, that a thousand workmen would be absorbed into other employments, with less suffering, from small workshops diffused through the country, than from one large factory; and that if profitable, it would be more beneficial to society, to divide ten thousand dollars between ten persons, than for one to absorb the whole; and the chance of pauperism would be diminished, inasmuch as the probability would

be increased, of that kind of return to the labourer, which would do most good to society at large: for as I shall show in the sequel, luxury by which ~~was~~ ^{will} labour is certainly promoted, is but a negative good. In one case the monopoly would be divided—by further division it would cease, and the evil be done away.

It appears to me, that a more extensive means of ultimate distress to the poor could hardly have been devised, than those large manufactories which have been fostered by the laws of particular states. It is not certain that with equal means they can compete with smaller establishments under individual management, and every difficulty and embarrassment will be felt by the poor. If even ~~they~~ should produce great individual wealth, it does not follow, that the general condition of the people would be benefited.

The embarrassments which they have already sustained, have operated in many ways injuriously to the public, and yet the general laws of trade, which makes every man's property liable for all his debts, have been lately violated, prospectively, by at least one of the states, in favour of these institutions. It may be questioned, whether if the true spirit of the constitution admits of such anomalies for private interest, it ought not to be changed. If, however, the farmers should now be authorized to divide their farms, have the dairy, the

grazing and grain fields protected from execution except for losses sustained on each, there would appear to be a greater equality in it, and agriculture is surely of no less importance to the state than manufactures.

It is some satisfaction, that Pennsylvania has steadily resisted every petition for incorporations, except for institutions of a decidedly public character; but as we compose a common country, we are liable to great injury from laws which we have had no part in enacting.

There are various accessories to pauperism which are often mistaken for the cause of it. Saving-labour machinery extends in some form to almost all the operations of life. The work of the plough and the harrow may be done as well by the spade and rake. These then are saving labour machines; but they are not evils, simply because they are not extended beyond what the world requires. Every thing produces discord that goes to force production faster than the natural state of society calls for. If machinery was used simply in following nature, it would be a blessing; but while nature has to follow it, and is distanced in the contest, it is the means of destroying harmony and producing every degree of suffering and misery.

Is there no remedy? Are we placed here to witness misery and wretchedness without a

means of relief? That it is not a necessary effect of existence, it will be my business to show.

In England, causes and effects are fully exemplified. Where so much wealth? Where so much crime, or such wretched and appalling poverty?

Formerly, carding, spinning and weaving, were carried on by the people in their own cottages; these were days of happiness and prosperity to England. Banks and saving-labour machinery were augmented—capitalists were enabled to monopolize the means of living—the sources not only of competence but of comfort were engrossed by the rich—facilities in manufacturing were increased a thousand fold—goods were multiplied beyond the demand—wages were lowered from time to time, till they yielded the lowest minimum of existence, nay, even workmen were limited in the hours of work, lest the evil of too many goods should be still further increased.

Can any one seriously doubt the cause? If from the first there had been a reasonable reciprocity between the employers and employed, all would, according to their wants, have been placed equally in a situation, above those transient changes, which may at times effect all trades: the profit would have been curtailed to the employer; this would have tended to lessen the wish to build new facto-

ries, and in the event all would have been benefited. In times of prosperity, labour reaps an increased reward; but it is a reward that can have no permanency while ability exists so immediately to choke every demand.

In the embarrassments that continually occur, those master manufacturers who have fewer advantages, fail, and give to others the means still further to monopolize that wealth, which, divided, would probably have increased the comfort of all, and added to the prosperity of the state.

In those vortices which over production continually produce in trade, if the employer pays a fair remuneration, he is ruined; and the question presents, of a cessation of work or decrease of wages; the latter is chosen as the most humane course, yet its effect is distress to the poor workman: and there can be no doubt that the payment of even a scanty pittance, with the purest motives of alleviation, often ends in the total ruin of the employer.

Where are we to find the cause of these evils, but in that spirit that is so prevalent among us, which to gain its own ends, is continually increasing production beyond the demand; and the case admits of but one remedy.

Can the employer pay for the materials and work on a hat, or a coat, or yard of cloth, more than it will sell for when it is done? or

can be made the purchaser pay more than the current price in the market, and which is always decided by the proportionate supply and demand. In all cases, a mass of pauperism may be traced to over production, and this to the spirit of money making.

It may be supposed that this excess of production injures only those trades where it exists. But the depression of one branch of business affects others, in proportion to *it* and *their* extent. If the cotton spinning in England is prosperous, labourers are abstracted from the farming and other interests—hence wages rise. Thrashing, mowing, raking, and other machines are resorted to, to supply the place of manual labour. Cotton spinning declines, with it the ability to pay the farmer, while a surplus of labour is thrown back upon him; and the result is, as much distress to the one as the other. Thus it is that the mantua-maker and tailor, who work only with their hands, may be just as much injured as the cotton spinners, whose wages have been lowered through the means of machinery. If the one receives a dollar a day for work, while the other can get but half as much, there is an influx and reflux from the one to the other, by which both are brought to a common level.

If cotton spinning is limited while the others are extended, the surplus labour is absorbed

without sensible effect. The reverse if the contrary. If many of the great leading interests of the state are burthened with excess of production, ~~and of labourers~~, the others are necessarily crushed by them.

A gentleman engaged in card-making, told me, that he had at one time about nine hundred persons employed in sticking cards in Philadelphia. Machinery was introduced by which the labour was done so much cheaper, that his cards would not sell for first cost; he expressed deep regret at the alternative, but continuing to give out work would end in his own ruin, and could only last till that was effected—that with reluctance he was obliged to throw all this labour upon other employments for support.

The different interests of a country are linked together by an indissoluble union. No one can be permanently prosperous, while the others are depressed; and yet from a variety of causes connected with each, some will be liable to much more rapid participation in general distress or prosperity than others. If the wages for common labour should raise to double its usual rates, thousands would immediately seek this employment; the deficiency which caused its extra price would be filled, and it would return to its wonted minimum. Not so with that of the carpenter or blacksmith; these are not made in a day; still less those

that require greater proficiency or more time to accomplish the change.

It is evident that mendicity in particular cases may be traced to extravagance, profligacy, intemperance and improvidence. It is not my design to consider particular cases so much, as its extraordinary increase.

These have always existed, and form a small catalogue disconnected with the cause I have mentioned; by it they are multiplied. What more effectual means to dishearten and discourage, to promote improvidence and intemperance, than by cutting off the prospects of a rational existence? What encouragement for providence when its goal is still distress and difficulty—when the hopes of the poor hardly bud before they are blasted, may it not be expected that thousands will seek in the bottle a supposed alleviation from despair? When there is scarce a prospect but of continual, increasing toil, temporary pleasure will often be sought where it is to be found, even at the expense of those better feelings, which, under other circumstances, would lead to moral prosperity. This is human nature, and it is what is to be expected.

These things are but in embryo among us. The prospects for the poor, furnish in this country some hopes, as the result of industry and economy: yet some always are found less thrifty in their habits, less able to endure

hard work. While wages are so low as to furnish to the strong, the healthy, the economical, and the industrious, only a reasonable subsistence; the mass, in whom these qualities are not combined, will suffer.

In the reign of Alfred, it is said there were no idle persons in England, and none who needed relief but a few sick and impotent, who were sustained by the parsons, rectors, &c., without regular provision. Poor laws were the fruit of a much later period, and were designed to help the poor by giving them employment at home; this was considered the best and most important part of the system, and it was at first beneficially applied. But as labour was gradually transferred from the cottages to the factories, it was attended with great difficulty, and finally fell into disuse.

The land of England is pledged to the poor for their support, and they by law are the final inheritors of the houses and factories, the parks and princely domains. In many parishes they already receive a large proportion of the rental, and unless some change takes place, they will ere long receive the whole.

The continual augmentation of the evil can lead to but one result. It may be delayed, but it is difficult to perceive how it can be finally averted.

The poor rates amount to a sum, which it was supposed, half a century ago, the country could never sustain. It is easy to unravel the complicated arrangement by which they are paid. It is a system of props and balances, no one of which can be moved without danger to the whole fabric. The land must pay, hence its produce must be protected by corn laws—these balances must be maintained, or the constitution comes to an end.

If by any means the increase of machinery could be prevented, the elasticity of society might gradually accommodate itself to its present magnitude, and its evils would be lessened to another generation. But while under the sanction of laws and of public opinion, it is continually made to embrace new objects, and more and more to supersede manual labour, there can be no hope but for a continuance of appalling pauperism.

This state of things has produced a variety of plans of amelioration, both in and out of Parliament, generally abundantly crude and superficial. The most popular at the present time, are those which recognise a too abundant population; hence plans to discourage marriages and to promote emigration. But why this surplus? only because the “sacred thirst for gold” has increased machinery, has multiplied production, and, as a consequence,

reduced wages, till the poor can no longer be maintained by the labour of their hands! The country would yet comfortably feed and clothe ~~and sustain~~ millions more of inhabitants. The national debt, as at present owned, and the taxes levied to pay the interest, increase the evil: yet if the debt of eight hundred millions was equally divided among twenty millions of inhabitants, and the nation owed to each individual forty pounds, it would be no burthen to assess each for his part of the taxes for the interest, when the money would be immediately returned to him again. It would enrich none and make none poor, and it ceases to be an evil in proportion as those who receive the interest are assessed by taxes to pay it.

If the town of Liverpool held all the debt, and the whole country was assessed to pay the interest, the one would become tributary to the other; and so far as it is owned by comparatively a few individuals, the country becomes tributary to them; and in proportion to the smallness of their numbers, the channels are decreased for its profitable return to the people. The error is not in the debt itself, but in that unequal distribution of it, by which the labour of the poor is made to fill the coffers of the rich. This monopoly of wealth is the main-spring of pauperism—in comparison of which, the burthen of ~~her~~ fleets and

armies, and immense taxes, sink into insignificance. As a medium of distribution, luxury and extravagance lend their aid. What would become of the country, if the proprietors of princely domains, were to lock up their rents in their coffers? Thousands more would become beggars. Yet if the wealth expended in luxury was laid out in building cottages, and giving them, as a free inheritance, to the poor, furnishing them food and clothing, an equal amount of labour would be employed, and there would remain a lasting and substantial benefit. The lapidary and lace-maker, and a hundred similar trades might suffer temporary distress; and these constitute no small portion of the labouring poor; yet their suffering, and incorporation into other trades, would be a minor evil, and would soon be remedied. We have seen the accounts of drawing-rooms and levees, in which intimations have been given, that the company were expected to appear in British attire. These things afford a temporary relief to poverty, but every system is itself intrinsically bad, that calls for such remedies. It is said to increase trade—that unceasing thirst after trade, which has almost undone the British empire, and which like the dram to the drunkard, has now become necessary to sustain her tottering existence.

Trade is the idol of the British Lion—to it

he crouches—from the commissions in her army to the hob-nail, every thing is brought to the balance of gold; and her science and literature, as her morals, are said to be equally degraded.*

Excess of production must find vent. Europe and America are traversed by British adventurers seeking to dispose of their goods; and the inhabitants of India itself, who formerly made and sold millions of pieces of common muslins, have found themselves thrown out of employ by British machinery!!

I may be told of exports to pay for British muslins, that are now sent among them, but has this change been made without suffering and pauperism, resulting from stopping so many thousands of the looms of the poor helpless Hindoos? and yet with so many sources of trade, like the horse leech, the nation seems never to have enough.

In Ireland and Scotland there are, in point of fact, no poor laws; they have been resisted, under the idea that they increase poverty by promoting idleness. Yet the evil is not lessened; the poor are yet to be provided for; and where more abject poverty than in Ireland?

In their distress the poor degraded Irish called for Catholic emancipation; every liberal feeling was in their favour, every wrong

* See note (a) at the end.

was attributed to the want of it. It was granted, and did good by removing a bone of contention; but it neither fed the hungry nor clothed the naked—and hence produced no change in Irish pauperism. This engrossing evil remains untouched.

The dissolution of the union with England, and the return of absentees are now called for; and with a greater prospect of advantage, so far as they may induce the rental of estates and the charges of government to be expended among themselves. The former too will give to radicals or patriots, as we may choose to call them, a better chance for achieving independence, which in itself can be no blessing if the minds of the people are not prepared for it.

I have dwelt longer on British pauperism, because it involves all the principles of which I treat—and these, so far as they exist among ourselves, produce the same results.

We have indeed our independence recorded on parchment, but we are still England's humble servile copiers; our fashions emanate from Bond-street—our laws and institutions have been derived from her; though “yet in the gristle,” wealth holds with us even a greater ascendancy, and we become degraded by its influence. While these causes exist, they will produce the same results, changed or modified by particular local circumstances.

These, at present, are powerfully operative in favour of diminished pauperism among ourselves. The curtailment of entails, and the abrogation of the law of primogeniture, resulting in the continued division of estates, the cheapness of land, and the calls for labour in clearing and improving new territories; and hence the continued demand for surplus population; form powerfully controlling influences.

In the country there is comparatively little pauperism. It appears to exist in proportion to the wealth of particular districts. There are townships in this state, not among the mountains, new and almost without inhabitants, but old and long settled, where there is no poor tax; and why, but because there has been nothing to tempt cupidity to personal aggrandizement.

As yet little pauperism is to be traced to our general manufacturing establishments, situated in the country; the workmen are reasonably paid, and though they have been subject to occasional excess of product, arising principally from the redundancy of Europe, which has materially reduced wages, yet while agriculture remains so predominantly the business of the country, the surplus labour arising from these fluctuations, has been absorbed into it, and returned again, without much perceptible change.

If the American System, as it is called, should ever produce an extent of manufacturing proportioned to that of England, the evil, if not so great, would still be of mighty extent. If, instead of hundreds, thousands should be thrown idle, and made dependent on other employments, the effect would be widely different. For although new land may remain to be cleared and cultivated, and would always induce favourable results; yet those who have been long accustomed to the work of factories, become inefficient to the work in land; that an increase of pauperism may be expected from this cause, if it should extend itself beyond its relative proportion.

The farming interest left to itself, is never likely to produce pauperism; simply, because there is no extensive monopoly in it, and the true harmony of society can not so easily be violated. Machinery can not be introduced to multiply labour a thousand fold; it is still, and it is to be hoped ever will remain to be, a plain employment, giving but limited profits, even to economy and industry. If farmers could, by machinery or otherwise, increase their produce at pleasure, the business would, under the influence of the desire of gain, be engrossed by a few, and the same proportionate misery would be the result.

The effect of this beautiful system of nature, which gives the farmer a reasonable re-

turn, and presents reaction to every attempt at aggrandisement, is seen in the simplicity, virtue, and independence, of the agricultural population, ~~and in its~~ comparative freedom from crime and mendicity; and it is completely reversed as we enter our cities and towns.

Commerce, whose sails whiten every sea, and trade in all its various branches, are here concentrated and prove the prolific sources of poverty and crime. Trade, which produces nothing, draws tribute from every branch of production; less entitled to respect, if one employment can be less respectable than another, traders yet receive double honour; less essential to the state, they maintain, through their wealth, a double influence.

It is trade that turns the wheel of fortune, and sobriety, industry, equity, and truth, are often less its favourites than duplicity and overreaching.

The excess of trade, has probably produced more individual suffering, more distress to the poor in this country, than every other cause combined. The fluctuations which succeeded the wars of Napoleon, shook the value of every species of production, impaired credit, destroyed confidence, entered into every dwelling, and brought difficulties and distress to hundreds and thousands of families.

It may be unnecessary to say more, than

that extra-trade, produces no wealth to the state. These things appear complicated, because we take them in masses; they are simple, taken in detail.

The price of a barrel of flour, returned in cloth or common muslin, is of equal real value to the farmer, because they are equally necessary for existence; yet if the return is in extra ribbons and lace, it is evident, that economically speaking, the spoiling or destruction of the flour, in the farmer's barn, or that of the extra lace on his wife's head dress, is equal.

It may be supposed, that there is still profit in the transit; this is so far from being true, that it only increases the loss. The flour may pass from the farmer to the smith, the tailor, the carpenter, the labourer and the merchant, and a portion of profit remain to each; this increases the value, and its final exchange for luxuries is a loss, not only for the first cost, but for every additional value that it has received.

The country certainly became enriched during the wars in Europe, the price of produce was increased, and a general development of the internal resources of the country took place; but the importation of luxuries did not add to that wealth.

A thousand glittering prospects are held out to view by trade, which a thirst for gain

is eager to embrace; our cities are filled with inhabitants; a few get rich at the expense of the rest; the jails overflow with culprits, and the poor houses are filled with paupers.

It is in cities that we see labour unequally rewarded; abject misery and wretchedness entering the dwellings of the poor; sighing, and suffering, and sorrow, mitigated, indeed, in some trifling degree, by a return to them of some small portions of that wealth, which the course of business has robbed them or their fathers of, to place in the hands of their rivals. To the inhabitants of cities, new land affords little relief, because they become unfitted therefor, they remain to endure present sufferings, rather than encounter such as are unknown; by resorting to employments for which they feel unqualified, and the evil is likely to remain, and to increase from one generation to another.

There are many men who are made what is called independent, by an income which their fathers have prepared for them. These are just as much supported by the industry of the community, as the pauper who receives a gratuitous living. If they are, as many are, actively engaged in the civil and social relations of life, in promoting the welfare and happiness of their fellow men, they may thus return to the community an equivalent for what they receive from it. If, however, they

are idle, or in proportion as they are so, they are as entirely a burden on society, as the pauper who lives on daily charity. The rent or interest, which ~~constitutes the income~~ of the one, is as much drawn from the daily toil of the farmer or mechanic, as the gratuitous charity which is bestowed on the pauper.

If the idle man, instead of spending income, spends principal, he so far is performing the greater service, by thus destroying the monopoly which his fathers have created. If on the other hand, instead of spending principal, he monopolizes more, he does the greater evil.

The habits and manners of the nations of Arabia or of Scythia, or of the aborigines of America are certainly not adapted to civilized life. Yet in considering such a subject we gain something in finding even one starting place in which theory can be tested by practice. And we have many. From the frozen regions of Greenland and Siberia to the fertile islands of the Pacific Ocean, man is every where essentially the same. Wherever a great inequality of wealth exists, there is misery and depravity; where it does not, there is realized a superior degree of moral perfection.

I shall extract in a note the sentiments of a celebrated French traveller, on the comparative freedom and moral perfection of some of

the nations of the eastern continent, and also some remarks of William Bartram, so well known and esteemed by many now living as a distinguished naturalist of this country, on some of the native tribes of our hemisphere, written before their general degradation by white men. Whether we can learn any thing from them or not, they will confirm the theory which has been advanced, and which I think admits of no refutation.*

Unhappily Europe, refined and civilized Europe, presents but few of these animating pictures, yet it is not wholly destitute of them. The republic of San Marino has existed since the fifth century, and still retains unchanged her pristine vigour, amidst all the political storms and tempests, which have so often, in that long period, shaken Italy to its centre.

There are none of its inhabitants abounding in wealth, none abjectly poor. They have a great reputation for probity and justice, and are said to live more happily than any of the other inhabitants of Italy. Neither oppression, nor poverty, nor ignorance, exists among them. There is no Theology mingled with their civil government, the oath of executive power being taken on the book of the statutes. To this sanctuary of liberty, Bonaparte, with all Italy at his feet, did homage by a solemn embassy, offering friendship, and fraternity, and

* Irwin. See note (b) at the end.

resents, and an extension of territory. But, alas! they are without foreign commerce!*

“Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey,
The rich man’s joys increase, the poor’s decay,
‘Tis yours to judge, how wide the limits stand,
Between a splendid and a happy land.”†

Having traced, as I conceive, pauperism to its true sources, and enforced my theory by a few of the many facts which have occurred; the next and most interesting subject of enquiry, is the means of reformation. And I here confidently assert, the impossibility of lessening the evil while its causes remain!

However individuals may differ in their views, and in forming limitations to those refinements and elegancies of life, which many deem so essential to happiness, we still ought to be willing to enquire, whether they have been obtained through suffering and privation to our fellow men. It may be observed, that it would be as unreasonable to bring nations as individuals, to one standard. From causes which might be easily explained, the inhabitants of one country may indulge to a much greater extent, in what may be deemed

* Sir Walter Scott with his accustomed illiberality towards Napoleon, says: “There were no pictures in the little republic, or they might have been a temptation to the citizen collector!!” See note (c).

† The Deserfed Village.

luxuries than others, without oppression to any class of its inhabitants.

The popular plans of reformation are Education, ~~W^m 11th Dec 1808~~ Temperance Societies, Societies for bettering the condition of the poor, for the encouragement of faithful domestics, &c.

There can be no doubt that the moral conduct of man is under the control of circumstances; remove a child among the Indians or Hottentots, and he will readily adopt their manners and customs, learn their language, forms of religion, to live on yams, homony, or venison; this would be conformable to public opinion. But how unreasonable would be the attempt, while hunting was the business of the nation, and their fathers were continually seen animated with the enthusiasm of the chase, while it not only furnished abundance of food and clothing, but held out the prize of honour and distinction, to teach Indian boys not to hunt!

And is it not equally unreasonable to expect, that moral education can be effectual to lessen pauperism, further than that public opinion, which indirectly promotes it, can receive a more elevated tone? If the sources whence precepts are promulgated are corrupt, what can be expected from them?

Estimable and enlightened individuals may have an influence in forming youthful minds, and giving a favourable cast to public opinion,

presenting thus some barrier to the increase of pauperism and offences against society. But the high expectations formed of the effects of education, appear to me visionary. If it may produce moral virtue, it may also produce vice. "Knowledge is power" no more for good than for evil.

Teachers take character from the feelings of those that employ them; if under the purest conviction, they should go much beyond the state of society, they would be designated as fanatics or madmen. Public sentiment is the measure of teaching, as it is the guide to the taught;—an engine for good or for evil.

The education which is proposed as a certain means of reform, is school learning, combined more or less with what is termed religious instruction.

Nature has created no superiority of understanding, in classes of citizens. Individuals excel in particular mental qualifications, and the development of these, will be found to be adapted to the peculiar wants of life.

So far as we follow nature, we shall give to each that education which may best fit him, to fulfil with propriety all his duties; more than this would be an evil.

If scholastic learning should set afloat any portion of that population, which more happily to itself, and more usefully to society,

is engaged in the plainer walks of life—make an undue proportion of traders or merchants, lawyers or physicians, it might do essential ~~injury~~ ^{ibid} People's views may differ as to the point of limitation, while all might agree in its further extension. But it seems to me as unreasonable to expect virtue to flow from it, *as a necessary consequence*, as from increasing the power of a machine.

Where are we to find evidences that scholastic learning has lessened pauperism and crime? Are the rich, as a body, who are generally best educated, more virtuous than the poor? It has probably done much good, but has it not been the means of increased pauperism, vice, and wretchedness? and yet as a consequence, from an abuse of its advantages, —not as a cause.

Whence all this mighty multiplication of machinery, which has given the power to individuals, to effect purposes which are producing so much misery? Has not a more diffused education been an accessory to the evil? Is it not hence an agent in the production of pauperism and vice?

There are indeed counteracting influences in it, which produce good. If it were not so, it would be the greatest curse that the world presents.

The steam-engine, by its accelerated force, may print more books, spin more cotton, and

leave more leisure to those dependent upon it, to promote either the happiness or misery of their fellow men; and education may facilitate either, though ~~in a different way~~.

Is Massachusetts, or are those countries or districts where it has been most extended, more free from vice than Pennsylvania or Virginia? I presume, ignorant as our population may be supposed to be, without any general system of schools, the morals of the inhabitants of the country in this state will bear a comparison with those of any other in the union—and there is believed to be less pauperism among us.*

The system of school learning has had a more liberal support in New England than in most other parts of the world; yet the itinerant population of that country, by an abuse of its advantages, have done much to attach opprobrium to its name. Knowledge has been to them power, by which, through the chicanery of trade, the name of "Yankee" is, in many minds, associated with deception.

Whence all the lamentation that "the glorious days of New England have gone by"—that the characteristics of her children "have departed—that the luxuries, and vices, "and fashions of strangers, have usurped the "beautiful plainness and simplicity, the free-

* See Niles's Register of April 2d.

“dom, the generosity, and the bravery of
 “New England. * * * * A false and evil
 “spirit hath gone over the land, the plough
 “has been exchanged for the insignia of pro-
 “fessional life, and the spinning wheel for
 “the piano.”* Has education effected the
 change? By no means; but it has not pre-
 vented it—it has given activity to other
 causes, whence they have been more certain
 in their injurious effects.

Religious education being considered more particularly an antidote to crime, I shall leave it for another part of this essay, and say a few words on Temperance Societies.

Lessening the abuse of intoxicating liquors, would certainly be an event altogether favourable, in decreasing pauperism and moral offences.

A serious, reflective mind, would probably believe, that the denunciations of the drunkard, by the zealous partizans of Temperance Societies, are rather calculated to drive men to despair than to cure the evil. Is it men, that feel they are themselves frail and fallible, that exhaust the powers of language, to paint the horrible vortex of the drunkard’s life, and to consign him, if their ineffably feeble powers would permit, to spiritual death and a miserable eternity?

It would be an interesting subject of inquiry, how far drunkenness is dependent

* New England Review.

upon particular temperament, climate, or other causes, and whether the numerical number of drunkards is materially increased, in those districts where ~~whisky distillation~~ distillation is a prominent business, and its produce easily procured. In England, drunkenness is said to be more common than in France; and yet in the latter, there is supposed to be less pauperism, more ability to purchase, and wines and brandies are more abundant and cheaper. Whence this difference? Might it not appear, that its increase is to be traced to primary causes?

It is said that nine-tenths of the cases of pauperism are to be traced to strong drink. Are not effects often mistaken for causes? It is a superficial view which looks no deeper than to physical results.

A large, perhaps much the larger proportion of drunkenness is the effect of loss of property, penury and physical distress. Still, resulting whence it may, it is a great moral evil; and if Temperance Societies can mitigate it, without producing other evils, they are worthy of encouragement.

Drunkenness exists in every class of society. Among the rich, its incipient stages are generally produced by wine; among the poor, by spirits, beer and cider. As there can be little hope that these societies will reform the confirmed drunkard, their only chance

of success is by guarding the avenues that lead to intemperance.

In some countries, beer forms part of the food of the poorer classes; many individuals who have been accustomed to drink it fall a prey to drunkenness. Among the rich, the habitual wine drinkers of early life, requiring, as years advance upon them, stronger potations to produce the desired excitement, often eventually fall in the same way.

Rum or whiskey, by their cheapness, seem as much adapted to the means of the poor, as wine to those of the rich.

Some jealousy has been excited in many minds towards Temperance Societies, because they are so much in the hands of the clergy; and the question has been asked, whether the prevalence of drunkenness itself, was a greater evil, than the increase of that mercenary clerical influence which is supposed to prevail? Those who are not accustomed to bargain with principle, or to encourage one evil with the view of lessening another, and who view, as many do, this influence as producing an extension of proscription and unkindness, will probably pause before they encourage them. With all it may be a question, how far societies, whose tendency is to lessen individual responsibility, can ever be permanently beneficial.

Those various societies which are design-

ed to improve the condition of the poor, have been formed probably with benevolent intentions, and no doubt afford much temporary relief. This is all they can do: they do not reach the cause of the evil. They are objected to, and supposed to increase the difficulty, by promoting a dependence upon them, and encouraging idleness in the poor. I have before stated, that idleness in rags, is no more burthensome to the state than that in fine linen. In all, it is an evil which necessarily throws more toil upon those who work. Temporary as is the relief afforded by such societies, it is still a moral duty to alleviate distress; and too great a sensitiveness as to imaginary results, may impede that benevolence which is so pleasing an attribute of the kindlier feelings of humanity.

Whether relief is best obtained through combined or individual exertions, or exclusively through a poor house system, may be a question; but there is something revolting in the practice, which has sometimes been pursued in some of the townships of this state, of putting the board of paupers, in effect, at public auction, to be under-bid, and contracting with those who will keep them the lowest.

That course of trade, which has taken property from the poor, and placed it in the hands of the rich, may make each idle.

It would be ungenerous for one class of idlers to reproach the other. There is indeed far less excuse for the rich than for many of the poor; because the former have more the means of useful employment within their reach; and though the kind of labour may be different, society, who supports both, has as much right to ask its return of the one as of the other. Wealthy individuals, who after the toils and labour of youth, and of meridian life, retire with advantage before incompetency begins, will grant to age, even in poverty, its hours of repose.

I am not thus pleading for idleness, but I plead for the poor—not to extenuate their faults, but for compassion. I should rejoice, if by the common consent of every state in this union, the hours for a day's work could be limited, except by voluntary consent, and on extra pay. To be partial, it would be an evil. I plead for the poor, to save them from that excessive toil which the world demands of them, as the price of a comfortable existence. I plead for them, to lighten the censure that is heaped upon them, for a want of economy and of management, because in their superiors, who have had better educations, they often have bad examples. I plead for them, in showing that as a body, they have not been altogether the authors of their own distress.

The benevolence of societies and of individuals may be abused, yet every thing that draws money from the rich to distribute it among the poor, ~~does a double good~~—first, to the poor, second, in lessening the wealth of the rich.

The Society for the Encouragement of Faithful Domestics, appears to be designed to increase the comfort of masters and mistresses. If domestics would now form a society for the encouragement of faithful employers, they would both be on a footing; and is there less need of one than the other?

There are, no doubt, unprincipled servants—petulant, ill-natured, deceitful, and dishonest; but are there no such masters and mistresses? Is there any evidence that one class is better than the other? It appears to produce disastrous effects, when people suffer themselves to clan together, to place bans of proscription upon their fellow creatures, especially the rich upon the poor. The effect is, if a servant happens to get several captious, fretful employers, who require unreasonable work, and hence chooses to change his place, he loses character, a record is preserved, a mark in reality is placed upon him, when, perhaps, much more than half the fault lies—not upon him.

Extend the system far enough—let the different mechanics and artizans combine to en-

courage faithful journeymen, and hundreds may be driven to despair at the nod of captious employers!

If masters and mistresses were all true men and women, kind, considerate, and compassionate, it would still be an evil; it is greater, if, as a class, they are in no respect better than their servants.

Examine the details of the lives of many servants—the midnight parties, the watchings, the wakings, the card-playing, the gambling, the wine-drinking, the deception, the dissipation of various kinds which they are called to witness—and yet they are expected to keep clear of all these things! With what consistency can the master ask the servant to restrain from whiskey, the poor man's drink, while he indulges in the unnecessary use of wine? How can he expect from him sobriety, industry, and economy, when he sets him an example in none of these things?

Having incidentally observed that luxury never produces wealth to the state, but is a means of diffusing it among the poor, I may add, that to them it has its attendant evils, in creating wants for which their means are unequal.

It is an advantage to society, by lessening those hoards of money which would otherwise accumulate. The difference between the miser and the spendthrift is in favour of

the latter; and yet neither may be right. Wealth generally produces luxury, this leads to poverty; and thus the wheel turns round.

Simplicity is the natural result of mediocrity; and while particular sects have believed it to be consistent with religion, they seem not to be aware, that it is inevitably destroyed by the accumulation of wealth.

The result has been a continued warfare, in which sooner or later money produces its effect, and children, or children's children, if their wealth remain, are lost to the sect. It was in vain that William Penn gave to his posterity precepts of moderation and simplicity, while he left the means to counteract them; and these means have always finally prevailed. Remove the causes, the point is gained, and the warfare ceases.*

The power and resources of a nation, would be almost unlimited, in which simplicity was the natural effect of right causes. The little state of Lacedemon is an instance of this—but she fell, as it is said, under the enervating influence of luxury!

It is mistaking effect for cause to charge the fall of nations to luxury. Whence luxury but from too great an inequality of wealth? The history of the republics of Greece and Rome is familiar to every reader; they existed for centuries in comparative purity, virtue

* See note (d) at the end.

and prosperity. With the increase of wealth came the arts, the luxuries, and what are called the refinements and elegancies of life; and connected with them, crime, pauperism, and individual misery. History is full of the most interesting examples. But to what purpose is our boasted intelligence, while the professed reformers of the day gain so little from them, and amuse the world with specious promises of reformation, through the most superficial means, which ever engaged the attention, not of a discriminating, but of an ignorant people. The perverted taste—and can I call it any thing else—of many individuals, would probably prefer the enjoyment of the elegancies of life; even connected as they often appear to be, with moral depravity and misery. Yet these are not in themselves, necessarily the causes of individual distress. And as I have said upon another occasion, no precise limits can be drawn beforehand, either for nations or individuals.

Luxury is always an evil when it destroys that equipoise, which, in individuals no less than in a state, is necessary for the perfect harmony of existence. As one or another passion gains the ascendancy, it enervates no less the physical, than the intellectual constitution. Hence as a class, “the simpler inhabitants of the country” are not only most

robust, but the “most worthy and respectable part of every nation.”*

It may admit of a doubt whether princes or the nobility of the European courts, could long maintain the governments of any country, without occasional accessions from the people. Few of them are capable of any efficiency in the affairs of state, while instances are not wanting, of comparative imbecility in whole families.†

The powers of a Napoleon, a Tamerlane, a Peter, or a Frederick, were not acquired within the precincts of voluptuous courts.

Luxury has been the continual theme of moral denunciation and useless legal penalties, for thousands of years. Have writers been afraid manfully to probe it to its root, and show it as the natural offspring and alleviating medicine of a diseased society, comparable to one poison operating as an antidote to another.

None clearly define it; because that which is luxury to one generation becomes convenience to the second, and necessity to the third. Chimneys and oaken houses were luxuries a few centuries ago in England. A writer in the reign of Elizabeth says—“formerly we had smoke, but our heads did never ache; now we have chimneys, but

* Encyclopædia Britannica—article Rivers.

† See note (e).

“catarrhs and posies. When our houses
“were builded of willow, we had oaken
“men, now our houses are made of oak our
“men have not only become willow, but a
“great many altogether of straw, which is a
“sore alteration.”*

Yet luxury would not be defined, by any intelligent person, as comprising those things which add to the health or real comfort of individuals. A luxurious life is that which causes a departure from the precepts of nature, in which fashion holds the ascendancy; which turns day into night and night into day; and which is manifested in too much eating, drinking, or sleeping; in every indulgence which tends to decrease that harmony in the animal economy which nature calls for. Luxury, though it may temporarily relieve, can never cure pauperism—it reaches not the cause, and relaxes the general system.

A judicious application of that wealth which is now devoted to luxuries, to bettering the condition of the poor, could it become popular, offers a means for their improvement.

Swaying the world by their own peculiar influence, I present to the female sex, a plan for active benevolence towards their fellow creatures, unmixed with many of those ignoble practices which degrade human nature.

• Hume's History of England.

If its exercise call into action some degree of heroism, it may yet inspire a more exalted self-respect, produce more health and comfort, more domestic happiness and tranquillity of mind; against all of these, fashion, debasing fashion, is put into the balance, and weighs them down!

If a lady, who was about to spend ten or a hundred dollars for the superfluities of a party, would suffer it to go towards the purchase of a house or a lot of land for a poor family, a permanent good would remain.

It is not too much to calculate, that yearly, by this means, from the mere luxuries which every one would acknowledge they might as well do without, hundreds of families might be comfortably accommodated with houses of their own. Admitting that an amount equal to their cost would be abstracted from the confectioner, pastry cook, habit-maker, &c., and that there might be some loss and distress in the change which would be necessary in their employments, yet this offset to the advantages, would be of small consequence while industry was equally promoted. And is not each individual accountable for that expenditure of his money, drawn as it is from the public, which will most promote the good of society?

In times of calamity, the female sex have been found casting their diamonds and brace-

lets and rings into the public treasure: and shall they not do as much to cover the houseless poor? Shall their sighing, and the crying of the needy not arise before them? Shall they have no bowels for suffering innocence? Shall destitute women and children plead in vain for compassion at their hands?

A general division of property has been spoken of as a means of curing pauperism. It answered in Sparta, carried into effect by a despotic chief, whose powers were devoted to maintain a system of equality. With us, power resides with the people. If the thing could be effected, where is that elevated public sentiment which is to continue the equality? Reform public opinion, and the evil is cured, without so desperate remedy. Unless this is done, it would be useless—with it, unnecessary.

Few appear to understand the overwhelming influence of public opinion. In a free state, it is the omnipotent moral power—taking its character from the virtue and vice of society, and holding out certain indicia, which are easily read, of the state of the moral atmosphere.

Pauperism being deeply incorporated with the state of society, and of public opinion, in order to give permanent relief, these require to be changed; and this is the only popular remedy that will reach all cases. We have

no Lyeurgus to effect it, but we have the same power, residing not in one, but in many minds.

Here then we meet the difficulty. To remedy the evil of pauperism, we have the herculean task of changing public opinion, in a point which has long been prejudged and decided, by the learned and unlearned, by the poor as well as the rich. For although opinion or sentiment, is not, in itself, physical evil, yet it is the moving spring of action; and while essentially wrong, whatever temporary good may appear, society treads on a volcano, which is ready to burst under its feet.

This change can only be effected in individuals, and only safely and permanently in them, under the operation of the unerring principles of justice, virtue, and truth. Who forms public sentiment but individuals? who changes it but they? not in masses, but each for himself. Whether he consents or not; whether rich or poor, whether for good or for evil; each brings to the common stock, that individual sentiment, which combined, forms public opinion.

While we partake in the causes whence pauperism flows, we are contributing to fill our poor-houses and rob the poor of bread. I thus, without judging or imputing evil to any man, hold out a mirror, in which each



may see for himself, and examine the state of his own mind.

I am aware, that there are many persons with considerable estates, who are less avaricious than others who are poor. No one can properly draw the limits for other men, ignorant as he must be, from outward observation, of the peculiarities of feeling, and of respective situations.

Are we yet left without the means of ascertaining for ourselves? Can any unprejudiced mind suppose, that that power which weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance, which preserves the beautiful harmony of the physical world, has created man, a little lower than the angels, and left him without a guide?*—Dreadful the conception! Is it less so to suppose, that he has made him dependant upon books or writings, the doctrines or opinions of other men, as fallible as himself, liable to be tempted by every ungenerous and ignoble passion? Though there are many, whom the sophistry of education has taught to deny it; many who are violating common sense by the doctrines they teach, who are creating prejudices towards those who differ from them in opinion. Yet all, carry in their own bosoms, a judge of their actions, whether they have been good, or whether they have been evil. This judge, or

* See note (f).

power, or principle, which the eye seeth not, nor the ear heareth, but which every accountable being understands, can alone define what is unnecessary; what too much wealth; whether we entertain an avaricious spirit: and an appeal may be made to its unbiassed influence, operating in every bosom, as the only means of knowing ourselves, and by an attention to its dictates, of lessening all the evils that there are in the world.

It is no new principle of action; philosophers of every age have referred to it. Pythagoras, Plato, and Seneca, Confucius of China, Menu of India, Philo the Jew, and a thousand others; the Sheiks of Arabia, and the natives of the American forests, acknowledge its influence. Every true Christian must revere it, as the vital energy of that pure religion, which, elevated above forms and ceremonies, breathes peace and good-will to men.

This is the only remedy, which universal and eternal, co-extensive with every evil; applies equally to Jew and Greek, to the bond and free. As it operates in the minds of men of all climates and colours, it preserves each in that true social harmony and economy, in which the causes which produce distress to the poor, can neither blossom nor bring forth fruit.

Turn on which side we may, there are still

harmonic laws, which sustain each organization. Science is engaged in investigating them; in the arts, in music, architecture, &c. there ~~are~~ ^{are} men who are employed in defining them, and the rules, and notes, and orders by which they are designated, are but the imperfect signs of a genuine harmony, that exists independent of them. The medical profession is the study of this harmony, as applied to the animal economy, and the means of restoration from the effects produced, by a violation of its laws. Our mental organization, precludes the possibility of knowing each other's hearts; and the same justice, which has given to different men those various qualifications best adopted to the social state, appears to have dispensed the power to each, of perceiving good and evil for himself, and this alone makes him an accountable being.

It is the development of this power, always equal to all its ends, which brings the minds of men into that true harmony, which, however designated by laws, is above them all. For evidence that violence is somewhere inflicted, I appeal to those reports, which have distinctly stated the case of hundreds of sober, industrious women in our cities, who with hard work, can earn little more than a dollar per week, to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves, and perhaps several children!—I appeal to the necessity of hard and unceasing

toil to the poorer classes of society, to sustain a family and preserve a general independence and comfort; and which, however humane an employer may be, can not always be avoided, while each business must either sustain itself, or come to an end. I appeal to the sufferings from cold and hunger, from disease and distress, resulting from the artificial state of society in which we live, and which are but the cries of nature for relief, from the infringement of some of its laws.

Dost thou deplore the condition of the poor, ask then thyself whether thou art contributing thereto! shall thy heart bleed for the sufferings of others, and not inquire whether thou hast by any means promoted them! Wilt thou open thy hand in charity—devote thy money and time to their assistance, and yet be afraid to meet a close and scrutinizing examination of the cause of their distress?

CRIME.

The nature of crime—uncertainty of law—Salem murder—Bible and Tract Societies—religious and moral instruction—sectarianism—Massachusetts—Connecticut—educated and spontaneous virtue—individual accountability—effect of wealth.

CRIME may be defined a violation of conscious integrity—without that there can be no crime.

The powers and principles which actuate our conduct through life, appear to be differently developed by nature, in different individuals. Without adopting the doctrine of the phrenologist, I may use his succinct classification, under the heads of amativeness, destructiveness, aquisitiveness, benevolence, ideality, &c. With different abilities and perceptions, it seems to be received as an axiom, that all are equal in the eye of heaven. Any other idea would be derogatory to that equity which forms so beautiful an attribute of the Most High.

It alters not the case, if we suppose a perfect similarity in the minds of infants, and admit them to be differently influenced by the nurse or the mother. Dispositions that pro-

duced, wherein the child could have no agency, he can not be held accountable for.

However they originate, it is evident that there are strong and peculiar mental and animal propensities in individuals, and that to form a just estimate of crime, these should be brought into view.

Crime, in all cases, involves evil intention; the infant and *non compos*, to whom it is not ascribed, can not commit crime.

Moral evil is distinct from motive. If by accident I break my neighbour's leg, I do him the same bodily injury as if it were done by design; yet it involves no crime.

If there can be no crime without evil intention—and this, in all cases, springs from an impurity of mind—is it not fair to argue, that the real evil is in the mind that conceives; the act being only the visible proof, and that often when this proof is wanting, and no offence committed, the guilt may be the same?

He who conceives the design to kill his neighbour, loads his gun and draws his trigger, may be considered to have had all the malice aforethought, which is held to constitute the guilt of murder, though from accidental circumstances, he could not discharge his gun, and hence the man was not killed.

From these premises, the entire uncertain-

ty of judging more than the moral act, will be easily seen: and if my reasoning be correct, it may be inferred, that those who come under the name of culprits, and are placed in our prisons, are not always more corrupt than many other members of the community.

Justice, benevolence, truth, &c. &c., we consider to be simple principles, wherever exercised, and under whatever shape they appear, or however various or obscure may be our perceptions of them. And may not evil be considered in the same light. Whether adopting the popular opinion, we give to it a positive, or shift our postulate, and give it a negative position, and call it only the absence of good, it changes not the argument. Whether one or the other, I shall regard it as a simple principle, and infer that individual minds are allied to it, in proportion to their impurity.

Although moral benefit may, in particular cases, be the immediate effect of impure influences, and thus evil may appear to produce good, yet the fruits of virtue and vice, must be consistent with their own nature.

If we are ourselves evil, we are in union with other minds of the same character, under whatever different circumstances they may be placed.

The law apportions punishment in some degree to the nature of offences; yet it never

recognises motives as evil, unless connected with some overt act. A depraved mind, producing fruits of its own nature, such as pride, avarice, ~~and envy, of hatred,~~ and the like, may, in the eye of the law, be guiltless; while the same principle in others, and perhaps no higher degree of it, by taking another direction, may produce larcency, adultery, murder, &c.

Many acts which are deemed highly criminal by the laws of some countries, and which subject individuals to severe punishments, have been and are legalized by those of others.

Adultery, which our law considers only as a civil offence, has, in some ages and countries, been punished by hanging, drowning, whipping, and tortures of various kinds; and in others, the law has not only approved, but encouraged it. Theft, which is punished in some countries by death, has been encouraged in others.* There are also the technicalities of the law, and the errors in its administration, which lead often to absurd conclusions. The common law, in considering *that* real estate which is attached to the soil, and not recognising the idea that *it* can be liable to larcency, comes to this conclusion, that an apple can not be stolen off a tree, nor corn from the stalk whence it grew; the act of

* See the laws of Lycurgus.

plucking, by which they cease to be real estate, puts them in another's possession;— yet if once placed on the ground, they thence become the *personal estate* of the rightful owner, and taking them is theft, and punishable accordingly!

We can understand our own motives, penetrate into the recesses of our own hearts, trace every effect to its cause; yet amidst all these conflicting evidences, how can we be certain that other men are worse than ourselves?

I am aware that it is said, “by their fruits “ye shall know them;” but who are to judge of fruits? We have seen in the last few years, from accidentally combined circumstances, among which were the discovery of a few human bones, that a person was deliberately condemned to be hung in Vermont, for murdering a man, who afterwards was found alive in a poor house in New Jersey! ✕

The law wisely acts upon the best evidence it can obtain; but how shall fruits certainly decide, in that state of society, where “evil is often taken for good, and good for “evil?”

The inference is just, notwithstanding this general uncertainty, that a life of morality or immorality proceeds from correct or incorrect principles.

Crime of all kinds appears to result from

the abuse of those powers which are necessary for our happiness. Aquisitiveness, which should induce the acquisition of that extent of property which would most bless us, leads some to avarice, others to theft, and these things increase with accelerated power, by indulgence. Thus the miser heaps up his money with double energy, as years increase upon him; and the thief continues his depreciation till the latest period of life.

Drunkenness, gluttony, lasciviousness, &c. all proceed, as we suppose, from the one impure source. They often obtain the empire of the mind, and hold it with a tenacity which seems to defy the natural powers to dislodge them.

We see the drunkard abhor himself—loss of character, of friends, of fortune—disgrace, disease, and infamy, arm him not with fortitude to overcome the fell destroyer. Every other lust is of the same character, and appears to obtain the same ascendancy. We may blame the victims, but they are often objects for deep commiseration, impressively admonishing others to beware of the beginning of evil. There is abundant evidence that yielding to temptation lessens the ability to overcome, till man, with all his boasted free agency and exalted powers, falls almost hopelessly.

Crime being the effect of evil intention,

6*

comprises every variety of offence, which can spring from a corrupt heart: but the particular results are modified in a thousand ways, by accidental circumstances or peculiar natural propensities.

I am not attempting to break down the barriers between virtue and vice; or to argue from the uncertainty of legal restraints, that there is no absolute distinction between moral good and evil; but I thus invite an examination of the nature of crime, and I plead for compassion towards those whose offences have become apparent, by suggesting that individuals may partake in, and be accessories to errors which they severely condemn in other men. A standard of virtue is erected in every mind, suited to its own situation and condition in life, not wayward or changeable, but competent to preserve, or to renovate and reform: and though what is deemed injurious in one country, may be approved in another, and thus give rise to different laws, yet that which is esteemed evil, combined with wrong intentions, is every where the test of moral offence. We may be unable clearly to decide the degree of turpitude which actuates other men, still, if we carefully examine our own motives and propensities, we may discover whether we are, in any degree, participating in those causes which produce evil.

The inordinate pursuit of money, is one of

the means which gives activity to crime. Do not all who encourage it, or give it an immoral tendency, become more or less identified with the particular effect which may be produced?

Avarice appears to have been, not only the immediate, but the remote cause of the late murder in Salem! In its devotion to wealth, society held it forth as the means of comfort, of happiness, of respect and distinction. Could it be supposed that he that formed the design, and he who held the dagger, would not feel the influence? and thus the love of money, from an inert became an active poison, that led to the tragical deed! They applied the fatal spark to that train that had been laid by other men. Who then were accessories to the crime? This question every man may ask himself. If individuals should feel that they had participated in producing it, the responsibilities of the actors would hardly be lessened.

Public sentiment very feelingly revolted from the spectacle. It was not, and it is to be hoped never will be, prepared for such atrocities; but can any one doubt, that the pursuit of money, combined with more degraded principles, will continue to produce like effects? And is not this fostered by public opinion? We see its operations every day, prisons overflowing, and all the means which

benevolent minds suggest and carry into effect for reformation, seem as futile as though they had never been—the work of desolation still goes on!

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Connected as the subject is with that which has preceded, I may be subjected to the repetition of arguments which otherwise might be avoided.

While pauperism is immediately dependent upon physical circumstances, crime, being the direct effect of an impure mind, involves considerations which may be considered abstruse and metaphysical.

Education, and the circulation of Bibles and tracts, are in each case among the most popular remedies. On their influence I shall bestow a few remarks, as they appear to be connected with the particular subject under consideration.

The Bible being a collection of writings of various authors, in different ages, and under various influences, and combining every variety of sentiment, forms a written epitome of the moral world. The exalted truths which it contains, proceeding as we suppose from the inspiration of the Most High, may often be the means of exciting the mind to interesting investigations. Men draw from its pages authority to swear, to fight, for sobriety or drunkenness, as well as the purest principles of virtue and truth. Sentiments producing

such a variety of opinion, have been the effect of very different feelings, perhaps equally honest and consistent.

If interested individuals could make it what they pretend it is, "the invariable rule of faith and practice," it might do much harm. Many have seen the pretty paraphrase of Burns in favour of drunkenness—"Give him strong drink until he wink," taken from the text, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts—Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more;" yet a preacher of the Temperance Society, to suit a different purpose, finds in the same book this denunciation—"Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also." Can we believe both texts, or what umpire is to decide? It is said that the moral code of the Old Testament only is binding; are we still any nearer to certainty? Who is to decide what part constitutes the moral code? Is there any criterion, but in our own individual perceptions of virtue and truth?

I apprehend that in reality, however men may quarrel about words, each finds an ultimate tribunal in himself, and places the different texts, just where they ought to stand—subject to its decision.

The practical doctrine, “thou shalt not steal,” is plain and easily exemplified by the principles of *meum* and *tuum*, which are so readily understood by every child; whilst the moment we give it an authority, simply because it is written in the Bible, we give a license to take “wine for the stomach’s sake,” or strong drink as a means of forgetting sorrow, and perpetuate and establish prejudices, which however consistent with the particular feelings of the writer, had perhaps better be forgotten. If it does not produce these results, it is to be ascribed to that individual knowledge of right and wrong, which forms in every mind the palladium of virtue; under whose guidance we are enabled to estimate the excellent truths which it contains, while we may be far from believing that it was just for the Israelites to carry off the jewels of the Egyptians, or for Jacob to deceive his father in order to obtain his blessing.

The circulation of tracts appears to be so far extended, as to have become a public nuisance and a moral offence. It seems that under no circumstances we are safe from their intrusion. They are given to our children, distributed at our doors, in the streets, and dropped along the roads to be picked up by the unwary traveller! However excellent they may appear to those who circulate them, we ought in common courtesy to be protected

from invasions of our domicils. Many of them are calculated to excite the passions, and appear peculiarly improper for innocent minds. One containing an account of a Sunday School Union meeting at Washington, has just been circulated, wrapt up in newspapers!! In looking over the remarks of the late attorney general* at that meeting, it seemed that the study of the statute book, might have obscured in his mind the great principles of human nature. And in reading those of a "distinguished senator,"† I recollect that the "poor Mephibosheth's" of his own state, "Massachusetts Bay," in addressing King Charles, declare themselves "orthodox and peaceable in Israel, full of prayer, of faith in the gospel, and pure scripture worship," at the same time that they allege the necessity of hanging four Quakers, who they charge with "not believing in the Trinity, "the Lord Christ, the blessed gospel, nor in "the holy scriptures as the rule of life."

Those who peculiarly consider themselves "orthodox in Israel" in the present day, are the grand promoters of this plan for the "wide dissemination of pure religion," through the means of tracts, Sunday Schools, &c.; and however much it may now suit their purposes to unite with these individuals, yet should they now be, or become Unitarians, they are already proscribed as unbelievers "in the

* Wm. Wirt.

† Daniel Webster.

“gospel, in the Lord Christ,” and considered unfit for any civil office.

Having spoken more particularly of literary instruction in the preceding pages, my remarks will be principally confined to what is termed religious and moral education: only observing on the former, that it is often the means of increasing crime, by enabling its possessors to thread more effectually those mazy labyrinths connected with trade, which produce illicit gain; and still subservient to their purposes, carries them often triumphantly through, by the knowledge it imparts, of those various imperfections which are attached to the most perfect judicial system. Detection overtakes the more ignorant. A large proportion of the inmates of prisons are found to be of this description, and hence the idea, that increased literary education is a remedy for crime.*

Religious instruction deserves the more particular consideration, while so many hopes for the extinguishment of crime are based upon it.

Religion is that which unites and binds us fast to God; and which is believed to be the natural effect of purification of heart. If man can purify his brother’s heart, then he can give him religion—this he can not do. It must be evident, that if one can present fa-

* See note (g).

avourable influences, another can destroy them, or produce those of a contrary nature; and thus children would unhappily be left, upon that subject which is believed to be all important, at the mercy of their fellow men.

Science has decided, that perpetual motion is an anomaly, which would go to destroy every law of nature; if false, it is altogether false; the smallest gain in moving force, except under the known principles of mechanical powers, would lay waste the whole system. Intelligent mechanics often hear of the pretended discoveries of empirics, which though limited in their application, would, if true, subvert the physical world. It shows the greater progress that has been made in physical than in intellectual science—that men are not equally incredulous to every attempt to teach religion.

Is it not evident, that if one man, by religious education, can in any degree purify one, others may, by higher degrees of it, control other men, and prepare them, by particular combinations of circumstances, not only partly but altogether for Heaven? The deduction appears inevitable from the premises.

There are thousands, nay millions of men, who by peculiar events which have not been under their own control, are placed without the reach of religious instruction; are these in a worse situation than others as respects

religion? Are they equal subjects for eternal happiness or misery, and yet liable to be condemned for what it was not in their power to avoid? www.libtool.com.cn

Do not those who attach so much importance to what they term religious instruction, call in question the justice of a beneficent Creator? To what purpose are we born to an equal inheritance, if we are to be cut off from it by circumstances, formed for us by other men? To what purpose are we free agents, if we are not wholly and altogether so? Is that free agency, when parents and instructors can permanently influence their children, either for good or for evil? It can not be! Such a view is at variance with the immutable law of justice, with the divine attribute of mercy.

Men can teach morality, but the religious instruction on which such dependence for reformation is placed, is not even pure morality! It is a mixture of moral duties with creeds, catechisms, dogmas and modes of faith; and it may be a question, whether, from its perversion, the balance of influence may not be for evil, rather than for good.

This religious instruction, which men seem to believe will cure crime, is both in principle and effect as purely exclusive and sectarian in its character, as if it were confined to

a single sect; though as it embraces more, its baneful influence is not so extended.

I should call in question the divine precepts of the Christian religion, did it lead me to proscribe the Hindoo, the Jew, or the Turk; or to suppose they had received, less perfectly, the means of purification of heart than others: and when instruction tends to make injurious distinctions amongst men, for opinion's sake, it is so far from being pure religion, that it is not even pure morality! Under its unhappy influence, the missionary, often with a sincere mind, goes among those he denominates heathen, with those deep prejudices of education, which disqualify him from estimating that living spark of moral virtue that is found in every bosom. He teaches the dogmas and rituals which other men have taught him, and calls them religion!

When Columbus discovered America, under the influence of his own bigoted religious education, he appears to have thought that the initiation of the natives into what he called the true faith, was a compensation for the sufferings they endured, in tearing them from their native land and sending them to Spain in slavery!—thus violating moral duty for what he called religion. The simplicity of their manners, their happiness and moral virtue were set at nought in the comparison; and yet these form, to every candid mind, a

striking and beautiful contrast with the picture exhibited in the islands a few years after the promulgation of that peculiar faith which was deemed so important!

The aborigines of America are not a solitary instance: the poor blacks of Africa, and the Asiatics, have perhaps equally suffered under the withering blast of sectarian influence, miscalled Christianity! That they came under the name of Pagans, was their greatest condemnation: and what have they gained? Ask history and it shall speak!

The almost deadly hatred of the Turk to the Greek and the Greek to the Turk, and that between the Protestant and Catholic, and which is so fully exemplified in Ireland, is all to be traced to the same cause—religious instruction!

How few teachers there are, whose feelings are not tintured by the prejudices of particular sects of Christians! Ask them, and with one accord they will say they are not sectarian. They believe they are not so; their peculiarities appear to them essential, and this, which really constitutes sectarianism, is perpetuated by what is termed—religious instruction!

What has kindled the flame of religious persecution, but that which is called religious education? It is believed we are now secure from its repetition, under the guardianship of

public opinion. But effects of the same character are rife in our land of boasted freedom; prejudices, bitterness, and animosity, are seen mingled with the ~~piety~~ of individuals, and all to be traced to—religious instruction!

So far as this character of it extends, it is baneful to an enlightened public sentiment, destructive to pure morality, and if vital religion could be destroyed, it would often prove, in individuals, its death blow.

In what class of men is to be found the least charity to those who differ from them—the most evidences of a disposition to slander and to persecute for opinion's sake—which say most, in the language of conduct, “stand by thyself, I am holier than thou?” It is that which has received most of what is called—religious instruction! and the natural fruits of this spirit are moral offences. Let them be manifested as they may, every unkindness, proscription, or other action springing from impure influences, which injures a fellow man or society generally, either in mind or body, is a moral offence.

Whence these powerful efforts to stop Sunday mails as they are called—to enforce the observance of the Sabbath? Do they not all result from religious education? and from that partial kind of it which makes one day more holy than another, and which does not

perceive, that in religion no man is his brother's keeper.

The unrelenting language of proscription which issues from many of the clergy who have been educated at the orthodox theological schools, violates moral decency. It should deceive no one—there is no religion in it—it is a moral evil, it is impairing the happiness of communities, it is increasing crime! I have no intention of being betrayed into controversy, yet many instances might be recited of denunciations from which every liberal feeling recoils; and of which that part of the community who do not enter much into such discussions, have no conception. The object *appears* to be, first, money, and then power; “give,” says one of their beggars, “your watches, your necklaces, your finger rings; if you can not give a spike, give a nail; if you can not give a nail, give a brad.”* It is not consistent with my limits to enter into many particulars, and I am not the champion of any sect; but when I see the faith of sincere devoted men designated as “too coarse and abominable for hell itself,”† when the self-styled orthodox assume to themselves all the religion and virtue of the country, it comes properly into view in the present essay. One of their periodical papers‡ mo-

* Address “of the Rev. Mr. Bennett.”

† Mason's Farewell Address.

‡ The Recorder.

destly holds this language—"Who are the "enemies of the orthodox? Why every infidel and disorganizer, and Sabbath breaker, "and debauchee, and gambler, and every "haunter of grog-shops, and theatres, in the "land; * * * all the haters of good order, "the haters of virtue, the haters of God."!!

Probably no unprejudiced mind can believe such slanderous proscriptions upon all who will not subscribe to a particular faith. If the public sentiment of the sect was in a reasonable degree correct, such language could not be patronized.

As a committee of our present legislature suggest an idea of "religious instruction," connected with a general system of education, it can not be uninteresting to inquire what it is doing elsewhere.

Drunkenness I have considered as a great evil—though often no doubt secondary, or dependent on causes which can not be influenced by Temperance Societies: but I unhesitatingly say, let the chance of it remain; let our schools be left as they have been, to the yeomanry of the country, rather than encourage that instruction, which whatever name it may assume, is still inculcating unkind and unchristian feelings.

Proscription, though more gross among the orthodox, is not confined to them.

The learned president of Harward Col-

lege, in a late address delivered in Boston, says, "neither freedom, nor virtue, nor knowledge, has any vigour, or immortal hope, except in the principles of the Christian faith and the sanctions of the Christian religion." Mild as this language certainly is, compared with that before quoted, yet it is still, in principle, the same. It denies immortal hope, except connected with the Christian faith—and thus proscribes three-fourths of the inhabitants of the world !

It is a melancholy truth, that whenever men become devoted to any sect, they appear to lose sight of the real virtue of those who differ from them. Go among nations whose sentiments have not been perverted by what is called religious education, enter the cottages of many of the retired inhabitants of our mountains and valleys, who are removed from this kind of instruction, and we find them free from those bitter animosities. Have they less real piety? Of this I may safely challenge the proof. And it is under a full view of these things, and with a confident belief of the internal nature of vital religion, that I adopt the language of Ahmed, of the tribe of Wahidia, in Africa—"Men have a right to judge of actions, but religion must be left to God alone."

These sentiments, uttered in sincere devotion to truth, may probably be proscribed

and condemned, simply because they are opposed to educated opinions; and these are so limited in many minds, that if individuals of different sects unite in the condemnation, they will not believe it arises from sectarian influence!

When the state of Massachusetts formed her constitution, and still in revising it, only a few years ago, left to stain its pages, a proscription on Jews, and Catholics, and all who did not choose to attend protestant places of worship; was this not the effect of sectarian influence?

In a sermon delivered before the Massachusetts legislature, presenting generally liberal and enlightened views, the preacher remarks, that a spirit of religious freedom has uniformly distinguished their halls of legislation, that "no sentence of proscription has "been openly or indirectly passed on any "body of men for religious opinions;";* and yet the constitution declares, "that it is the "duty of all men in society, publicly and "at stated seasons, to worship the Supreme "Being—that the legislature shall from time "to time, authorize and require, the several "towns, parishes, &c. to make suitable pro- "vision at their own expense, for the institu- "tion of the public worship of God, and for "the support and maintenance of the public

* Channing's Election Sermon.

“ protestant teachers of piety, religion, and
 “ morality, in all cases where such provision
 “ shall not be made voluntarily * * * that it
 “ shall also have the right to enjoin upon all
 “ the subjects, an attendance upon the in-
 “ struction aforesaid, at stated times and
 “ seasons.”

The laws which have been founded here-on, partake of the same illiberality; and others of the like character, exist in most of the New England states, so that some sects enjoy those privileges which ought to be inherent in every free state, by particular acts of toleration.

It is from no wish to draw invidious comparisons, that I allude to these things. Different countries, and individuals of all sects, have their peculiar virtues; but it has seemed to me remarkable, that while the municipal township corporations of New England, exhibit a perfection of equality in government, which is rarely equalled, and perhaps never surpassed, there should appear to be a tendency to aristocracy, in their legislative halls!

The declaration of the right to *enjoin* an attendance at *Protestant* places of worship, and that it is the *duty* of all *publicly* to worship the supreme being, forms a remarkable contrast with the language of the constitution of Pennsylvania upon the same subject.

This tendency is exhibited in many ways.

It is only a few days since the public papers related an anecdote of a person being hurried from one of the courts, I believe from before the General Court in Boston, for keeping on his hat! It seems that those feelings, which have consecrated houses for worship, and made it necessary to uncover the head in them, have extended to pulling off hats on entering within the legislative halls and courts of New England! Many of the inhabitants of Pennsylvania will recollect, that a late judge in this state, at present one of the great nullifiers of South Carolina, was impeached before our legislature, and lost his office, charged with having directed a man, whom he first ascertained was not a quaker, to leave the court, or take off his hat. I write from recollection, and probably there were other charges of the same character, and he vainly attempted to justify himself.

The titles which are given by law in New England, are of like complexion, and it is a subject of regret, that they should obtain even voluntary favour in other states. If giving men the title of "honourable," would make them so, it might reconcile a distinction so inconsistent with the political principles of the country. There are yet other signs of this tendency, but I forbear. It is unpleasant even to bring these into view, lest my motives be misunderstood: and the state of Massachu-

setts is certainly more liberal than most others in New England, my remarks ought to give no offence in a state whose writers assume considerable superiority and profess to hold the cradle of American liberty, and I feel justified in making them to sustain my positions, and as evidence that those great principles of religious and civil freedom, which Pennsylvania has so dearly cherished, are not likely to be strengthened by that artificial religious instruction, which in most cases assumes to dictate to others.

As our own legislature have been organized purely for civil and moral purposes, it may be questioned, whether acting upon a report combining religious education, would not be an assumption of power never contemplated or delegated to it, the members have certainly not been sent there to legislate upon the subject of religion.

The broad principles of the Constitution of Pennsylvania, that "no man can of right be compelled to attend, to erect, or support, any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry against his consent—that no human authority can in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience," is not fully recognised by the laws of most of the New England states.

I ascribe the difference only to that artificial instruction, bearing the name of religion,

which has been so much more maintained in one district than the other, and which, in most cases, assumes to dictate to other men. Yet this is the ~~well~~ religious instruction which is patronized as a means of reformation!!

Liberal minded men, who feel anxious for the unimpaired preservation of the free institutions of this country, may well be alarmed at the spreading of sectarian influence, under the name of religious instruction. Preachers profess that they want no union of church and state, while every means is used to influence public opinion; and this done, their work is accomplished.

Till within about ten years, a Church Hierarchy existed in Connecticut, established by long usage, and sanctioned by law, in favour of orthodox presbyterians or congregationalists. Through the united and untiring efforts of other sects, and after many years of desperate struggle and contention, it was finally broken down. Now I ask every candid person who recollects the terrible denunciations against all those who endeavoured to destroy it, whether these efforts to retain power, are not to be received as *prima facie* evidence of the first character, of a disposition to secure it, whenever it can be obtained?

I may safely appeal to Connecticut, for a confirmation of every argument I have urged on the subject of education. It is well known,

that the state has long had an independent school fund, amounting if I recollect right, to near a million of dollars. In no other state in this union, has education been so long and so generally fostered; in no other state has religious instruction, as it is called, been so generally extended; in no state has there been so many guards against a violation of the sabbath; her "blue laws," as they have been proverbially called, have been enforced against friend and foe; prosecutions for working, even on days appointed for public fasts, have been sustained; and where are the fruits? active and enterprising as her citizens are, yet it is not too much to say, that they are not considered to be marked by a superiority of moral virtue; while the effects of her peculiar zeal, in what is termed religious education, are deeper animosities, severer proscriptions, and more inveterate prejudices, than have been formed elsewhere.

I refer the curious reader, to the system of laws of the state of Connecticut, by Judge Swift, as they existed but a few years ago. Under this bigoted church government system, a committee, appointed to expunge every thing inconsistent with the liberty of conscience, left still "the disability to sue, to prosecute, to be guardian, executor, or administrator," as a punishment for denying, either

by writing or speaking, “that any of the persons of the Trinity is God!”

I am not assuming that the inhabitants of the middle or southern states, are by any means clear of these sectarian feelings, but it is believed they are less apparent. They are spreading like a malaria through the country. Even that sect which had most reason to complain of the rigour of the eastern puritans in the 17th century, ~~are~~ now erecting standards of orthodoxy, drawn from the musty doctrines of their forefathers, on which different constructions are placed by different men, and hesitate not, and in no very measured terms of abuse and proscription, to assail such as differ from them upon nice points of doctrine, which unprejudiced minds would consider equally unimportant and inexplicable.

I do not question the private virtue or general moral worth of many sectarians; still less do I deny the entire right of each individual, or sect, or party, to maintain any faith they may choose; but when it results in acts that are injuriously affecting the community, when we can not protect our houses from garbled writings and inflammatory tracts, when men, under the highest professions of truth, are still found proscribing their fellow men, when intemperate zealots, while they pretend to declaim against the use of strong

drink, are still, by other means, inflaming the minds of the people, apparently for the accomplishment of their own sinister purposes; when it is declared that no good man will be seen travelling on the sabbath day, and when religion itself appears to be violated for the promotion of sects, it can do no harm to reflect, that since the period of the Christian æra, it is calculated that fifty millions of persons have lost their lives, from feuds growing out of this sectarian instruction, and that however quietly we may now seem to repose under the guardianship of public opinion, it is liable daily to become subverted, through the demoralizing effects of which I have spoken.

The decision, with which a petition for the incorporation of an Infant School was lately rejected; and that, a few years ago, for the Sunday School Union, forms an encouraging prospect, of what may be expected from our own legislature. Pleasing and animating as are the smiling and happy faces of infant scholars, yet while they are taught religious *opinions* which they can not understand, and which is always the case as far as I know, or have heard—their pernicious tendency, so far, is to me no matter of doubt.

When instruction is combined with those artificial influences, by which the tender minds of children are degraded and perverted by

principles, which ever have been so prolific in moral offences, what is to be expected, but increased effect from increase of causes? and that courtesy and brotherly love, which is due to our fellow creatures, will be, in minds not fortified by religion, superseded by imaginary distinctions, growing out of opinions, which, those who promulgate them, can not themselves either explain or understand.

This deleterious influence extends far beyond what may be at first imagined. Protestants travel in Catholic, and Christians in Mahometan and Pagan countries, with those prepossessions which disqualify them from any just appreciation of national or individual character; and it requires no very accurate observation to detect their prejudices, in stories related by them, that are often inconsistent with human nature.

The Turk and the Pagan have their own distinguished virtues; and though measured by that standard which has converted righteousness and prosperity into gold and silver, and attached consequence to particular forms of worship, they may be found wanting; yet a different view might be presented, under a true estimate of moral excellence.

Interested men may please themselves with forming splendid missionary schemes, to convert those they may choose to call heathen, but they can deceive no unprejudiced mind.

So far as we can judge, and we can judge only by fruits, uncertain as they are and ever must be, the spirit, the true and saving spirit of Christianity, is least apparent among those called Christians. It is no part of my plan to enter into the evidences which are afforded, further than it is connected with the subject under consideration. But among nations reproached with being pagans and infidels, scattered as they are over three-quarters of the globe, pauperism and crime, as known among us, are not to be found! And shall we call ourselves enlightened, and yet be so far prejudiced as to be unwilling to receive wisdom from them? I am not ascribing the difference to any efficacy in their religion; their forms may be even more childish than many of our own—and true religion is the same everywhere—but selfishness is less cultivated. And may we not in comparing institutions learn the real causes of that distress which predominates among ourselves? And having learnt these, we shall be able more clearly to decide as to the remedies which are adapted to our own situation.

A generation has almost passed, since extraordinary efforts have been used in increasing what are termed religious institutions.

- ✗ Have they lessened crime or pauperism? The question needs no reply, it is already answered in every intelligent mind.

Is it then religion that is producing effects so different from those foretold? surely not. The natural fruit of religion is every thing that is good and excellent in the world; its precepts are the perfect law of God written in the heart; it contains in itself the only certain remedy for pauperism and for every crime—it is a specific for every intellectual malady—will reform every abuse—correct every evil and purify every mind in which it predominates; its influence is felt in every bosom; it destroys sectarianism, and can neither be subverted nor increased but by individual means.

If it were not so common, it would appear extraordinary that men of benevolent intentions and kind feelings, should not at once perceive that those views which exclude the Jew and the Hindoo from an equal participation in pure religion, and make invidious distinctions among men for opinion's sake, do not emanate from that Power, which has made of one family all the nations of the earth, which is no respecter of persons, whose grace has appeared unto all men; and on this alone depends our equality as respects creation.

Public preaching, by whatever name it may be called, ought to furnish opportunities of the most refined and elevated moral instruction; but we find engaged in it, men, educated

but still ignorant men, often with sincere minds, whose efforts tend, if I may so say, to cast nature out of doors—who inculcate dogmas and rituals, rather than those plain every day duties, which are adapted to every capacity; and utter prayers, long and wearisome prayers, and call upon their members to join in them, which if they returned not void, would cause effects to cease, and destroy all the beauty of the intellectual and of the physical world.

While the power of religion on individual minds can not be scrutinized by others, morality is visible to every eye. It is in this that man becomes the creature of circumstances. The laws which are made to restrain, and the prisons to confine him, prove, that as respects morality, his free agency may be taken from him by other men.

Moral instruction has been so much combined with those miserable secular influences to which I have alluded, that its real excellence has been clouded and obscured by them. It necessarily embraces every relation in which man can stand with his fellow man. Its influence, though never a certain guarantee for individual virtue, may yet be powerful in giving a more elevated tone to public sentiment—in lessening those causes, which still existing, are inevitable in their effects.

How far it may be usefully extended, is

yet in some degree a matter of speculation and experiment.

A liberal minded gentleman, in an address upon the subject of Infant Schools, supposes that perfection of infant education may be attained, in which "habitual virtue with its attendant happiness, shall be substituted for "the struggle of self-conquest, or the pain of "conscious failure;" thus giving to the mind, through the influence of others, all that perfection of character, in which temptation comes to an end.*

Much as I esteem moral education, I can not still believe that it is consistent with the organization of our nature, that it should ever reach thus far. Children may be taught the nature of moral justice, benevolence, freedom, and the like; may be made to understand the courtesy and brotherly love which is due from man to man, and that most of those political, religious, and civil denunciations with which the world abounds, are violations of moral rectitude; and they may learn to practise as we teach; but this is only the semblance of that virtue which results from an elevated and uncompromising principle of action. In the one case men practise it from rules which have been formed by themselves or others; in the other, it is the result of a purified mind, which producing fruits according to its own nature, men do right spontaneously, because

* Wm. Russell on infant instruction.

they can not do wrong. In the one case, we see men making blunders as they are placed in new situations, and like the schoolboy, running to his books or his memory for correction; in the other, virtue flows without effort, and its combinations are always true. In the one case, men call in the aid of patience to restrain fretfulness and discontent, of prudence to control impetuosity, of charity to allay those budding emotions which would tend unnecessarily to injure a fellow man; in the other these particular virtues are absorbed, and left with but the shadow of a name, by a general purification of character. There is no difference with regard to the end to be produced; but I apprehend this perfection of character is, and must ever be, the result of the internal operations of the mind upon its own peculiar foibles, and that it can never be essentially promoted by the agency of other men.

Infant minds may be considered free from any taint of sin—equally incapable of virtue and of vice. Their first desires are for the gratification of appetites necessary for their existence—these increase and extend to other things with their capacities. In what way can the teacher prevent a child from desiring the toy which appears to yield his playmate so much happiness? Here comes the struggle—the conquest or the pain of failure.

Morality, resting as its surest and safest basis on religion, is yet not necessarily connected with it; it is a physical science, and like others, capable of ~~well-directed~~ demonstration while religion is intellectual; and though they may be often combined in the same individual, they exist separated from each other.

That man who faithfully performs his duty to his fellow man, is a perfectly moral man without any regard to the principles which actuate him. And though duty to his God involves every other duty, yet there are situations in which his actions can not affect his fellow man; and it would be as wrong to call these moral actions, as to call those things manufactures or mechanics which have no relation to the hands or to the mechanic arts.

Morality is simple, and easily understood by minds capable of embracing it—comprising most of the duties of life, our obligations to each other, to society, to the laws, to the state, and to the world; and conducted by those who are enlightened on the subject, forms the most beautiful and comprehensive system of instruction, which can engage the attention of man. It is interesting, though we may be sensible that unless founded upon that elevated and exalted principle which no parent can give to his child, nor man to his fellow, morality is liable to be swept away and destroyed; it is the more so, when we

consider how many actions of our lives are of a mixed character, partly arising from higher, and partly from inferior motives—it is interesting, in sweeping from the mind those errors which are often imbibed at an early period, or in preserving it free from them. It may also be a blessing, that kindness and good feelings should prevail, be the motives whence they may. That it may fail, or be perverted is evident. We often see children who have been educated under the purest moral precepts, taking the road to ruin; while others, who have never received much moral instruction, acting under the influence of a higher principle, are found performing every duty.

No man can read his brother's heart; and distinct as morality may sometimes be from real virtue, yet if we do undertake to judge the religion of others, this is the best test we can have.

I am aware that there is a miserable cant in the mouths of many zealous sectarians, about morality, and individuals of the most estimable lives are condemned as being unbelievers, infidels, or merely moral men. Do not such things indicate an ignorance of human nature?

Few indeed there are who have attained a knowledge of themselves—the only key to the human heart. A small proportion of

these become teachers of others! But admitting no deficiencies of this kind, when public opinion is wrong, it must often prove a blighting blast ~~on the buds of~~ promise. Under any aspect, while we may do all that duty requires, it becomes us not to rely too confidently on any popular systems, as a certain remedy for the maladies which afflict society.

Moral offences are held to be the proof of evil in others. Temptation, whence comes "the struggle for self-conquest, or the pain "of conscious failure," is the evidence of it in ourselves.

It is said, "there is no sin in being tempted," and I am not about to say that there is. But an examination of the principles of the human mind will show, that as every thing produces fruits according to its nature, that which is pure can never offer solicitations to evil under any form of temptation; hence the certainty, that when these are presented upon any one subject, therein we are not pure!

Would not many men deem it an insult, to be seriously asked, if they had not been tempted to break open and rob a house, or to kill a neighbour? Is there a pious individual who would not be shocked at a temptation to rob a man on the highway? Would he not

seriously inquire why it was so—whence so much corruption?

Every temptation is of the same character: many persons ~~do appear to believe~~, that combatting our passions and appetites, and gaining command over them, is the perfection of virtue—not considering, that the lion that is chained may be even more ferocious than others in their native jungle. It is the breaking of this chain that causes crime.

It has appeared most evident to me, that without some alliance with evil in himself, no man could imagine it in his fellow man, much less impute it to him.*

As we can only justly understand what sight is in another by the same power in ourselves, so can we only conceive evil in others by a like principle in our own bosoms.

* Since this paragraph was written, I have read sentiments directly the reverse, in the beautiful Illustrations of the Character of Fenelon, by Wm. Ellery Channing. In touching incidentally upon the subject, I have given the perceptions of my own mind, and what appeared to me conformable to the unchangeable nature of that virtue (and I use not the term in contradistinction) which is independent of all vice. There is plausibility in the reversed view, because in morality and all physical sciences, the errors of other men may be demonstrated, and continue to afford fresh evidences of their existence; while, as respects real and genuine virtue, or the absence of it, each can only know it for himself. No man can judge with certainty of his brother's heart. See "Discourses, Reviews," &c. &c., page 211, also 208.

"There is a spirit which I feel, that sees to the end of all temptations, as its bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other."—J. NAYLOR.

Children, as they are innocent, are unsuspecting and confiding—manhood becomes cautious; and it may be presumed that each perceives, or ~~imagines~~^{1b} ~~he~~ perceives, evil in other men, somewhat in proportion as he is allied to it himself. The best men are least censorious, not only because their power of perceiving evil becomes weakened, but understanding more their own hearts, they more fully know the possible inaccuracy of all proof of corruption, drawn from moral or physical actions. Men revile and persecute under the name of religion—we see proscriptions sanctioned by law, and those still more powerful, of public opinion—individuals condemned, by men who still crave that the mantle of charity may be extended to themselves—ministers of the gospel forming catalogues of crime, from standards which are only true for themselves, and dedicating them to public opinion, to direct its path. Shall we hence condemn them? Surely not. We may see the fruits which they bring forth, sometimes of peace and then of discord, and trace them to their respective causes, without judging of evil either the accused or accusers, or deciding how far each in his place may be just and true, and honest to his own feelings; or without relinquishing our position, that evil, in either, under whatever similitude, is exerting its influence in producing crime.

Shall we decide that the judge is wrong in administering justice, because if all men were honest there might be no occasion for his authority? ~~That the warrior~~ is wrong in bearing arms, because the magistrate should have no occasion of the support of the sword? That the preacher is wrong in public instruction, because it is the fruit of the imperfections of society—or that jails and houses of refuge shall be razed, because these are sustained by crime?

If, as men attained more elevated feelings, they were proportionably censorious, proscription would follow from reformation; and as each became purified from evil, his life would be devoted to a general condemnation of his fellow creatures! The reverse is found to be the fact. The more pure the spirit, the less the censure of others. Would not all, equally perceiving, equally condemn evil?

Charity is an excellent moral virtue—it is called a “celestial virtue,” still it is but the restraint of that principle which in seeing error has already condemned it. Would it not be better to find no occasion for it.

The unbiased operation of truth on the mind of each individual, can alone convince him, whether he is partaking in that impurity, whence come those moral offences whose origin is a subject of so much anxious inquiry. We may circulate hundreds of mil-

lions of Bibles and Tracts—increase professors of religion and theological seminaries—erect churches, prisons, and houses for reform—and ~~the cause to remain~~ untouched. Yet each holds in his own hands the certain remedy, perfect as respects himself. It is to be found in lessening those individual propensities to evil, which are often held with a grasp like that of death. Deeply interwoven with public opinion, they are felt by every impure mind—they come home to every bosom. If my reasoning is correct, whatever our stations or situations in life may be—whatever our professions, whether priests or laymen, orthodox or heterodox, rich or poor, accusers or accused, as we partake in the cause, we partake in the effect; and this seems to be equally consistent with the principles of philosophy, of reason, and of truth.

In this way we become accountable for every unjust law, and directly or remotely for every crime.

We may oppose such laws, and deem them unjust; but in a free state, laws are the effect of public opinion, and if we have done our part to degrade it, we have, in the same degree, partaken in making these laws, though their enactments may not be precisely such, as would have been the result of our own particular weaknesses. So of the errors of particular men, if we have laid the train for

their accomplishment, how can we excuse ourselves from being accessories to them?

When Julius III. bestowed the cardinal's hat on a boy of infamous character, who was the keeper of his monkeys, he asked the cardinals, who reproached him, "what virtue or "merit they had found in him, that could induce them to place him, Julius, in the papal "chair!"*

A monopoly of wealth, I have stated to be the main pillar of increased pauperism. Avarice, appears to be that of increased crime.

Money, as a medium of exchange, is deemed necessary. Habits have been formed for us, generally without our own consent, before years of reflection have arrived; these become second nature, and a reasonable indulgence is often essential to that equipoise of mind and body, which places each in his proper situation.

An equal division of wealth is no more necessary to general happiness, than an equal division of intellect, if that could be. Yet it is probable, that the point which would cease to oppress the poor, is below that which would gratify any of those indulgences which pampered luxury requires. Yet man, not satisfied even with this, indulges avarice—hoards up gold—hugs, what often proves a scorpion

* Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History.

to his bosom, and entails misery upon those who are to succeed him!

Too much individual wealth, produces pauperism, and is the means of increasing crime; it encourages luxury, and all the evils attendant upon it; often degrades the powers of the mind, and induces idleness, wantonness, seductions from the truth, sets up an idol to be worshipped in the place of virtue, and what is the gain? Does it increase domestic happiness, promote harmony in families, make children more obedient or more virtuous, or form them for better members of society?

It does none of these; it gives a debased kind of distinction and honour, and is supposed by many, to yield happiness—mistaken idea!—it does so, as the dram to the drunkard; permanent happiness is only to be found in that equilibrium, which nature has preserved in all her works; money can not give it, while any dependence upon wealth destroys it, and he whose hopes centre in it is an object of compassion and pity. The love of it is an evil, which like that for strong drink, gains power by indulgence.

In their operation upon these lusts, we may trace the difference between the powers of morality and of religion; by the one we may maintain a warfare with them, check their debasing influence, preserve moral purity—

and so far well: by the other, the root is destroyed, temptation ceases, the struggle for self-conquest comes to an end, and that tranquillity takes its place, which wealth, with all its honours, never gave; and this, extended to all things, purifies entirely, and constitutes the perfect man.

Beautiful as such a picture is, we may yet, though seeing and understanding but in part, conceive the whole. And no other idea can be entertained, of an entire purification of mind.

The “struggles for self-conquest” are often tremendous; like the storm and the tempest, their natural effect should be to renovate, not to destroy; yielded to, they become irresistible, till man loses his free agency, and a right eye or a right hand would often be deemed a small sacrifice, for the power of breaking the chains which bind him.

Though avarice or drunkenness weaken the mind, there are the same powers of restoration that remain to a partially diseased physical frame. We apply local medicines, deplete or stimulate as the case may require, yet the real cure is only effectually attained through the healthy action of other parts of the system.

The difficulty of overcoming habitual indulgence in any potent and predominant evil,

often baffles the resolution of the strongest mind. Higher temptation and stronger excitement generally make sure of their victims; and perhaps ~~the only probable~~ means of reclamation, is by less attention to the particular evil, and more to the purification of the whole intellectual system.

I know the popular idea, that connects with particular offences a prostration of every noble and elevated principle. It is not necessarily true, impurity of mind may take a local direction, and he that has one may be free from other vices. If we pursue our parallel, we may believe, that as "small hours gather to the gout," particular moral weaknesses may absorb others into themselves.

Considerable observation has warranted the parallel which I have drawn. Examine the victims, and judge candidly whether there may not be found evident marks in them, of at least as much moral virtue in other respects, as in other classes of society. If this is the case with one, we may infer it in every predominant evil; and yet with the certain knowledge, that those of a different character are sometimes joined in the same individual.

However the remedy may be accomplished, or whencesoever it may come, I consider that lessening the pursuit and the idolatry of

wealth, which so much pervades every class of society, is the only means of preventing pauperism, and that it promises happy effects in decreasing ~~moral~~ ^{and} ~~material~~ ^{material} offences.

Do I hence ask individuals to relinquish their pursuits, to unbar their coffers, and yield up their gold—do I accuse them of avarice or of crime? such has not been my design. I have endeavoured to elucidate an elaborate subject, in as few words as has been in my power—to trace effects to their causes, leaving to each the liberty which I take myself, of making the application which may best suit them.

I have frankly stated my own views, not without some regret, that circumstances have prevented their more perfect illustration.

My positions rest on those elementary laws which are peculiar to no country. The coal fields of Pennsylvania yield wealth, while they diminish the value of the woodlands and forests within the range of their influence; the fisheries—the farms of the ocean—are supported at the expense of those of the land; and all contribute to the general comfort, as they are required by the state of society and preserved in their relative ratio. The wealth of nations can not be arbitrarily increased. In our domestic relations, as in the animal economy, there is a harmony essential to the happiness of the whole; and this,

extended to society, is the cure for pauperism—to individual minds the remedy for crime. I repeat these arguments, as entitled to consideration by those who are disposed critically to investigate the subjects on which I have treated.

In incidentally touching on free agency, I was sensible that my remarks were useless to those who had embraced the Calvinistic doctrine of election, and who made the erudite works of President Edwards* on this subject a class book in the schools. And I advert to it, before closing my essay, to observe that men who believe that "God did "from all eternity ordain whatsoever comes "to pass—the elect unto glory, the rest of "mankind to dishonour and wrath—that men "not elected, though they may have some "common operations of the Spirit, can not "be saved—that they who have never heard "the gospel, (meaning the written record) "know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in "him, can not be saved, be they ever so dili- "gent to frame their lives according to the "light of nature, and the laws of that reli- "gion they profess"†—that it is sectarians with these limited views, professing as they thus do, that none of their efforts can be of

* Edwards on the Will.

† Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, page 15, 18, 52, 175.

any avail, who yet appear most zealous to influence public opinion: it is they who are most active to disseminate religion, through the means of ~~1800 Sunday~~ Schools, &c.—it is they, more than all others, who are getting up what they call revivals in religion—and it is they who are most severe and proscriptive upon others! Many of them no doubt, apart from these subjects, on which their minds have become inflammable and excited, may be excellent pious people; and they profess to take all their doctrines from the Bible!

I have stated the uncertainty of the Scriptures as a guide; and it is a fact, that the Catholics, comprising as they are supposed to do, three-fourths of the Christian world, declare that these writings alone, are not, nor ever were designed to be, a rule of faith and practice; and that as respects our Protestant Scriptures, they are but a false translation of a mutilated copy of the true Scriptures, which leads, as they say, to the most absurd and monstrous conclusions!

I am aware that it is common among Protestants to undervalue Catholic authority; but whatever may have been the case elsewhere, as respects our own country, while we recollect the cruel and almost sanguinary intolerance of Episcopacy in Virginia,* and the still more severe measures of the north, the

* See Jefferson's Works.

liberality of the Catholic ascendancy in Maryland is of a most pleasing character; and though the traditionary and educated opinions of the Romish church ~~may be like~~ those of other sects, her superior data as respects biblical history seems undeniable. But when all these conflicting evidences are presented to a mind that is disposed candidly to inquire after the truth, when different sects contend so bitterly about the meaning of Scripture texts—when one places so much stress upon one ceremony, and another upon another, where they can not even agree upon the means by which the great object of life is to be attained, I trust I may be permitted, without giving offence to any, to express my confidence in that principle of justice and truth which operates in all minds, and again to refer to it as the only certain means of radical reform. It comes not recommended by popular display, or splendid establishments, or wealth or power; still, though unseen, its effects are continually before us, sustaining the harmony and resplendent beauty of the physical world; and in the intellectual, inspiring those elevated sentiments, from which flow all that exists of disinterested kindness, benevolence, and good will to man.

We are only safe from violence as it operates in the minds of those by whom we are

surrounded. Confined to no country or class of men, limited to no sect or profession, dependent upon no peculiar faith, allied no more to learning than to ignorance, subordinate to no creed or written rule of life, it still appears to produce invariable tranquillity and peace and repose to the soul, in proportion as it is cherished and obeyed. It is the operation of truth and virtue, and which must be promoted or retarded, by each individual for himself. Though feebly heard amid the discord of contending elements, yet in moments of reflection its influence is seemingly exerted to bring every mind into harmony with its own nature, in every part of the habitable globe.

I am not so sanguine as to believe that these opinions will be extensively examined, or seriously acted upon; yet they may lead some individuals to a more distinct and philosophical view of the subject, and to a serious inquiry, whether they are themselves accessory to evils which they deplore.

I have not intentionally done injustice to the sentiments of any man, or class of men; and in using plain and unequivocal language, I have not for a moment doubted, the humane and benevolent intentions of other men, because their ideas have differed from my own.

While I consider that moral conduct is open to investigation, I impeach the motives

of none; evident as it may appear that wealth and power should partake in the censure, which is often unsparingly heaped upon the pauper and the degraded criminal, yet no one could say that these were free from blame.

It would be an extraordinary state of existence, if virtue found no means of escape—if a merciful Creator had left without a remedy, those who have not participated in causes which produce evil. It can not be so; virtue, though poor and needy, still finds its reward. Its pleadings would be heard even at the shrine of avarice—and that equipoise of the moral, physical, and intellectual powers, which constitutes happiness, is peculiar to no situation in life.

This is that mental harmony, the result of a peaceful mind, in which the soul, enlarged in its perceptions, sees things not in parts, but all as one stupendous whole, causes and effects inseparably connected, without finding its tranquillity disturbed, or imputing sin to any.

NOTES.

Note (a) page 28.

As my success in society was not inconsiderable, I am surely not a prejudiced judge upon the subject, unless in its favour; but I think it as now constituted, fatal to all great original undertakings of every kind. I never courted it then, when I was young and high in blood, and one of its curled darlings, and do you think I would do so now, when I am living in a clearer atmosphere.—*Lord Byron.*

It would be difficult to describe more strongly, or more convincingly, than Lord Byron has done, the sort of petty, but thwarting, obstructions and distractions which are at present thrown across the path of men of real talent, by that swarm of minor critics and pretenders, with whom the want of a vent in other professions has crowded all the walks of literature.—*Note to Moore's life of Byron.*

Note (b) page 36.

The Arabs are no strangers to property, but it has none of that selfishness, which the increase of the imaginary wants of luxury, has given it among polished nations, * * necessity has established among them a state of things, which has appeared to the wisest legislators as the perfection of human policy. I mean, a kind of equality in the partition of property, and the variety of conditions * * * and private poverty becomes at once the foundation and bulwark of public liberty. * * * * It must be owned, that

there are few polished nations whose morality is, in general, so much to be esteemed, as that of the Bedouin Arabs; and it is worthy of remark, that the same virtues are equally to be found in the Turkman hordes and the Curds. It is singular also, that it should be among these, that religion is the freest from exterior forms, insomuch that no man has ever seen, among the Bedouins, the Turkmen, or Curds, either priests, temples, or regular worship.

“And do not you yourself perceive,” said a Shaik, “that the Arabs live without troubling themselves, either about the Prophet, or the book (the Koran)? Every man with us follows the direction of his conscience. Men have a right to judge of actions, but religion must be left to God alone.”—*Travels in Egypt and Syria.*

William Bartram, a gentleman respected and well known to many of our citizens as entitled to credit, who resided for months, among the Florida and Southern Indians, more than forty years ago, before they were so much corrupted by white men, while he candidly admits vices among them, which he says, are not greater than what may be observed among the most civilized nations, speaks thus of their virtues: “However strange it may appear to us, the same moral duties, which with us form the amiable virtuous character, and are so difficult to maintain there, without compulsion or visible restraint, operate like instinct with a surprising harmony and natural ease, insomuch, that it seems impossible for them to act out of the common high-road to virtue.

The Miscogulges, though far more distant from the white settlements than any nation east of the Mississippi or Ohio, appear evidently to have made greater advances towards the refinements of true civilization, which can not, in the least degree, be

attributed to the good example of the white people. * * *

Astonishing indeed! when we behold the ill, immoral conduct of too many white people, who reside amongst them: notwithstanding, it seems natural, eligible, and even easy for these simple, illiterate people, to put in practice those beautiful lectures, delivered to us by the ancient sages and philosophers, and recorded for our instruction, * * *

How are we to account for their excellent policy in civil government: it can not derive its influence from coercive laws, for they have no such artificial system. Divine wisdom dictates and they obey. * * *

Do we want wisdom and virtue? let our youth then repair to the venerable councils of the Musco-gulges * * * So far from idolatry, are they, that they have no images amongst them, nor any religious rite or ceremony that I could perceive; but adore the Great Spirit, the giver and taker away of the breath of life, with the most profound and respectful homage. They believe in a future state, where the spirit exists, which they call the world of spirits, where they shall enjoy different degrees of tranquillity or comforts, agreeable to their life spent here.—*Bartram's Travels.*

This gives me an opportunity of expatiating again on the moral and religious character of the Siberians, as well as their intelligence, generosity, and hospitality. I found on the road, even among the peasants, a sympathy, a kindness, and attention to the wants of my family and myself, and a disinterestedness that I have no where else experienced.

A Grenadier who accompanied me, and who had travelled extensively in Siberia, after we got into Russia, and began to suffer certain impositions which are put upon travellers on the great roads in every country, would often exclaim, "God be with me

and my beloved Siberia! There people have their consciences in the right place!"—*Dobell's Travels in China and Siberia.*

I can safely affirm, that I know no people whom I could more confidently trust, as respects either my property or person, than the Esquimaux. We could not but admire the undisturbed security, in which those people hold their property, without having recourse to any restraint, beyond that which is incurred by the tacitly received law of mutual forbearance.—*Captain Parry.*

The approach to Moscow, not a little exposed the absurdity of the belief, that the approach towards civilization is the approach to happiness.

I feel convinced, that compassion is the leading characteristic of what are termed barbarians, and that man in a state of nature, will freely give to the distressed, that bread which he will not sell for money; and, I am justified by grateful experience in affirming, that those people who are the most ignorant and uncivilized, are the most hospitable and friendly to their fellows.—*Cochrane's Pedestrian Tour in Siberia.*

All their affairs are transacted without riot, without confusion, and without disputes. The utmost harmony prevails among them, they live like affectionate brethren of one family, and the authority of their chiefs appears to be only that of fathers among their children.

Whether they have any mode of punishing offences, or whether punishment is ever necessary among them, I can not say. I am inclined to be, however, of the latter opinion. I saw no punishments inflicted, nor did I ever hear there was any cause.—*Account of the Inhabitants of the Marquesas' Islands. Porter's Journal.*

Note (c) page 37.

Besides San Marino proper, the city and seat of government, there is at the foot of the mountain a large "Bourg," and at a small distance from that a village; the remainder of the territory presents the prospect of a rich soil, producing abundance of corn, wine, and oil, all of the best quality:—neat farm houses, fields well cultivated and well stocked, vineyards and olive gardens, compose a landscape the most enchanting,—and the most gratifying to the heart of him who reflects that all these indications of happiness result from a wise and just social order;—on all sides are seen the happy effects of equality, comfort and competence, peace and harmony. Such is the republic of San Marino, which through a long course of ages, has preserved its independence and its wise institutions; in the midst of the wars and civil commotions with which it has been surrounded, and notwithstanding all the efforts of violence, corruption, and intrigue, to destroy it, there it proudly stands uninjured, the prototype of a civil association, the most perfect and admirable, such, as before it was formed, existed only in the utopias of philosophers.—*Irwin's Letter. American Review.*

Note (d) page 49.

Be plain in clothes, furniture, and food, but clean, and then the coarser the better; the rest is folly and a snare. Therefore, next to sin, avoid daintiness and choiceness about your person and houses. For if it be not an evil in itself, it is a temptation to it, and may be accounted a nest for sin to brood in * * * You can not be too plain in your diet so you are clean, nor too sparing, so you have enough for nature. For that which keeps the body low makes the spirit clear, as silence makes it strong. It conduces to good digestion, that to good rest, and that to a

firm constitution. Much less feast any except the poor; as Christ taught, (Luke xiv. 12, 13.) For entertainments are rarely without sin; but receive strangers readily. As in diet so in apparel, observe, I charge you, an exemplary plainness. Choose your clothes for their usefulness not the fashion, and for covering and not finery, or to please a vain mind in yourselves or others. They are fallen souls, that think clothes can give beauty to man.—*William Penn's advice to his children.*

Note (e) page 51.

And after all, what is the higher society of England? According to my own experience, and to all I have seen and heard, (and I have lived in the very highest and what is called the best,) no way of life can be more corrupt. * * * In England, the only homage which they pay to virtue is hypocrisy! I speak of course of the tone of high life,—the middle ranks may be very. virtuous.—*Letter of Lord Byron.*

An attention to little things, renders it impossible to do any thing that is great; nor can he provide for the wants of others, whose own are numerous and craving. The great and necessary provision for a statesman, is not riches but a contented mind, which requiring no superfluities for itself, leaves a man at full liberty to serve the commonwealth. God is absolutely exempt from wants; and the virtuous man, in proportion as he reduces his wants, approaches nearer to Divine Perfection. For as a body well built for health, needs nothing exquisite, either in food or clothing, so a rational way of living and a well governed family, demands a very moderate support.—*Plutarch.*

Note (f) page 56.

Determinate lessons are given to us from infancy, to adore a superior being, and therefore some say, there is no proof that this feeling is given by nature; but observe such as receive no such lessons, and you will see that to adore, to venerate superior beings, and to respect beings around us, is a fundamental feeling * * * *

What I have to maintain is, that there is an innate feeling, a sort of internal monitor, which communicates to men the course which they should pursue, and the regulation of their actions in conformity to the principles of right. We see that it is more prominent in some characters than in others. I appeal to observation, to nature, to legislation, to answer whether this feeling does not exist, although we see but too rarely the influence of it, in overcoming the feelings which are opposed to it. * * * * — *De Spurzheim's 8th Lecture on Phrenology.*

Though my genius, unlike the *dæmon* of Socrates, whispered so softly, that very often I heard him not in the hurry of the passions with which I was transported, yet some calmer moments there were, and in them I hearkened to him, and learned to be wise.— *Bolingbroke as quoted by the National Gazette.*

Note (g) page 72.

Our laws against all manner of vicious practices are very severe; but these are all cobweb laws in which the small flies are catched, and the great ones break through. * * * the punishing vices in the poor which are daily practised by the rich, seems to me to be setting our constitution with the wrong end upwards, and making men criminal because they want money. * * * *

But the encouragement to vice by example, is what we are all concerned in, and I am, and ever

shall be, concerned to hear us talk of reformation, when those who should reform us, practise all the crimes they ought to punish.—*Life of De Foe.*
2d vol.

Do none owe crime to the example of parents, the stings of famine, and a variety of circumstances over which the culprits had no control? Poverty ties men to guilt; as the bone united Chang to Ching. And a poor devil born beneath the frown of fortune, is hung because it continues.—*The Siamese Twins.*

That convicts are dreadfully corrupt I know; but not more corrupt than some who walk at large, and are not excluded from our kindness. The rich man who defrauds, is certainly as criminal as the poor man who steals. The rich man who drinks to excess, contracts deeper guilt than he who sinks into this vice under the pressure of want * * I can not but remember, how much the guilt of the convict results from the general corruption of society.—*Channing's Election Sermon.*

THE END.

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