

Mary of the October 24

3

CORRESPONDENCE.

PHILOMATHEAN HALL, AUG. 9TH, 1854.

Rev. Dr. Palmer, Sir :—We have, this afternoon, listened with intense interest and pleasure to your profound and practical Address. In order that its influence may not be circumscribed to the large and intelligent audience that heard it, we herewith respectfully solicit a copy to lay before an appreciating public. With our sincere wishes for your future happiness, prosperity and usefulness,

We subscribe ourselves yours, &c.

R. S. DUNLAP,

J. C. MAXWELL,

W. LIVINGSTON HUDGINS,

COLUMBIA, S. C., AUG. 11TH, 1854.

Gentlemen :—In obedience to custom, I yield to your disposal the Address which you so kindly solicit; hoping that its sober perusal may benefit those for whom it was prepared. Wishing peace to yourselves, and prosperity to the College of which you are members,

I am, gentlemen, very sincerely yours.

B. M. PALMER.

MESSES. R. S. DUNLAP,

J. C. MAXWELL,

W. L. HUDGINS,

} Committee.

ADDRESS.

LORD BACON, in one of those aphorisms scattered through his writings, which, like ingots of wrought gold, contain such wealth of thought, utters this pregnant sentiment: "The inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it—the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it—and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of sense; the last was the light of reason; and his Sabbath work ever since, is the illumination of his Spirit."* A more beautiful text does not occur to me, young gentlemen, from which to deduce a theme peculiarly fitting to this occasion: THE LOVE OF TRUTH, THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCHOLAR.

The acquisition of knowledge is doubtless the proper employment of the understanding. This proposition will sound in your ears as a bald truism, accepted upon the bare statement. Yet the proof, which may not be needed for demonstration, is sometimes valuable for illustration. For however fortunate it may be, that the truths of greatest concern to man challenge immediate acceptance as self-evident, it is equally unfortunate that from their easy admis-

* *Essay on Truth.*—Works.—Vol. 1 P. 11. Montagu's edition.

6 *The Love of Truth, the Inspiration of the Scholar.*

sion into the mind, they often make but slender impression. It were well if the sentinel at the gate should challenge their entrance, at least, long enough to draw attention to their claims. They might then pass into the mind and take rank, as operative and productive principles; rather than slouch away into the dark chambers of the memory, like barren algebraic formulas standing for no real values. It will not, therefore, be supererogatory to dwell somewhat at length upon the relations of the intellect to truth; that we may collect materials, from which to enforce the moral rule which should govern us in the pursuit of knowledge.

Without attempting a minute analysis of the constitution of the human mind, two features present themselves upon the threshold. The first is the spirit of inquiry, thrusting the mind out upon external realities with all the power and constancy of an instinct. It is characteristic of the human race, though exhibited in very different degrees, and directed to very different objects. With some, it does not sweep beyond the domain of sense, and is expended upon the trivial things which fill the hours of common life. With others, the horizon, which limits their searching gaze, is only that which bounds the universe; and their transcendental inquiries glance, like arrows, from the eternal throne on which the God of Nature sits. This natural curiosity is perhaps most apparent in childhood, not only because the fresh mind is excited by wonder in the presence of mysteries wherever it looks; but because, until capable of making its own inductions, it is wholly dependent upon others

for the clue which shall guide its researches. Yet, in maturer years, when the opening of one mystery has afforded the key to others, and the mind has acquired confidence and strength for independent inquiry, this original impulse still operates, though the process of investigation may not be laid bare to the notice of casual observers. The instinct of the swallow does not more surely guide him in his ceaseless migrations, nor that of the bee impel it to gather dew from the opening flowers of Spring, than does this all-pervading, unconscious, and unreasoned instinct of curiosity in man, push him forth to interrogate the oracles of nature; nor shall its insatiate demand be satisfied, until the last secret of earth is yielded up to the torture of scientific research.

The second fact referred to in the constitution of the human mind, fitting it to be the instrument of knowledge, is that furniture of intuitive beliefs which form the starting point of all inquiry, and by which alone the mind is able to connect itself with the objects of knowledge. In the language of a writer, born and living in our midst, since the days of EDWARDS, the most acute metaphysician this country has produced; who, for the extent of his learning and the depth of his genius, would be an ornament to any country and to any age; and who, but for the reserve with which he has given his speculations to the world, would be universally pronounced the Sir WILLIAM HAMILTON, of America—"There must be a *constitution* of mind adapted to the specific activity by which it believes and judges. This preparation of mind to know, or its adaptation to intelligence, con-

sists in subjecting it to laws of belief under which it must necessarily act. As it is the *necessity* of belief which distinguishes *intelligent* action from every other species of operation, and as there can be no belief without the belief of *something*, there must be certain primary truths involved in the very structure of the mind, which are admitted from the simple necessity of admitting them."* It is not necessary, in this presence, to instance in detail which of our beliefs are thus primary and intuitive. You will at once recognise, as belonging to this class, the belief in our own identity, the belief in the existence of efficient causes to which we refer those events we cannot but regard as effects, the belief in the reality of the material world, and in the uniformity of the laws of nature, the belief in substance, though not cognizable by the senses nor penetrable by reason, as that in which qualities must inhere, and the evidence of memory enabling us to connect the link in the longest chain of deductive reasoning. These do not indeed lie in the mind, in the precise and logical propositions in which they are here enunciated; they are rather conditions of the mind itself, compelling it to believe in a given way whenever the objects of knowledge shall be presented. "As soon as generalized into abstract statements," to cite again the authority before mentioned, "they are original and elementary cognitions, the foundation and criterion of all knowledge. They are the standard of evidence, the light of the mind; and without them the mind could no more be con-

* Dr. Thornwell's Review of Morell's Philosophy of Religion, in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, vol. 3, P. 495.

ceived to know than a blind man to see." It is wholly immaterial to the purpose now before us what nomenclature we adopt with reference to these: whether, with LOCKE, we designate them as 'intuitions,' or, with REID, as 'the principles of common sense,' or, with BEATTIE, as 'instinctive beliefs,' or, with STEWART, as 'primary elements of reason,' or, with KANT, as 'categories of the understanding.' The long catalogue of descriptive titles, as shown by Sir WILLIAM HAMILTON, in his learned summary in the appendix to his edition of REID, arises from considering the different attributes by which these primary beliefs are distinguished from all secondary truths; such as their immediacy, their inexplicability, their originality, their necessity, their universality, their certainty, and the like. But by whatever names they may be indicated, they are primary and authoritative.

It is more pertinent to the matter in hand, to show that they are the essential conditions of all knowledge; without which the mind would be incapable of external research, and by which all the notions gained through experience are verified. The two conditions of knowledge evidently are certain objective realities, giving us the things to be known, and the mind capable of knowing them; not merely capable of receiving the impressions *ab extra*, but of judging and being certain of their truth. Now, says M. COUSIN: "We maintain that without universal and necessary principles, empiricism cannot account for the knowledge of the sensible world. Take away the principle of causality, and the human mind is condemned never to go out of itself and its own modifications. All the

sensations of hearing; of smell, of taste, of touch, of feeling even, cannot inform you what their cause is, nor whether they have a cause. But give to the human mind the principle of causality; admit that every sensation, as well as every phenomenon, every change, every event, has a cause; as evidently we are not the cause of certain sensations, and especially these sensations must have a cause, we are naturally led to recognise for those sensations causes different from ourselves, and that is the first notion of an exterior world." "Empiricism," he therefore concludes, "is convicted of being unable to dispense with universal and necessary principles, and of being unable to explain them." *

It is important to observe in this connection, what Mr. STEWART has significantly remarked, that "these intuitive truths, abstracted from other data, are perfectly barren in themselves; nor can any possible combination of them help the mind forward one single step in its progress." † They are not, he affirms; "the principles (*archai*) from which our reasonings set out, and on which they ultimately depend; but the necessary conditions on which every step of the deduction tacitly proceeds." ‡ As the axioms in Mathematics, though they do not furnish the materials, are yet the ultimate standard, of that species of reasoning; so he contends, "These ultimate laws of belief, though they form the first elements of human reason, cannot with propriety be ranked among the principles from which any of our scientific conclusions are deduced." ¶

* Lectures on the True, Beautiful and Good. Pp. 44-46.

† Stewart's Works. Vol. 2. P. 40.

‡ Ibid. P. 41.

¶ Ibid. P. 43.

Here then is man, furnished with these capacities for knowledge, with principles which not only enable him to inquire, but vouch for the truth of all he may learn, yet without power to generate within the mind itself a single material of thought; and he finds himself in the midst of a universe, which is to him but a great repository of principles and facts to be investigated.

This universe, both of mind and matter, presents itself in diversified panorama before him. No dull uniformity prevails, but myriads of objects make up the changeful scene. Here the Earth spreads out her broad bosom, on which, at intervals, the mountains lift up their peaks to kiss the heavens—now covered with eternal snow—now belching smoke and flame from subterranean fires—now the blue haze, like a veil of gauze, half conceals yet half reveals their peaceful outline on the sky. Within their dark shadows sinks the lowly vale or the deep ravine, the furrows of Almighty power. Here, the toppling avalanche crashes on its path of ruin, and sends its hoarse thunder through the vault of Heaven; while here, the foaming cataract leaps the shaggy precipice, and hisses in the boiling depths below. Anon, the canvass shifts; and,

“The full-faced moon sits silver on the sea,
The eager waves lift up their gleaming heads,
Each shouldering for her smile.”

And now, a sleeping giant whom the rough wind has wakened,—“The roused sea, white with wrath, strikes at the stars.” Then, in endless series of dissolving views, is unfolded the richer scenery of the sky. The

fleecy clouds, grotesque and massy, form into Gothic piles of castellated ramparts, which seem to mock the proud architecture of the builder, man—or, rolling up in huge embankments, rugged and vast, present mountain ranges beneath which the wildest Alpine solitudes grow tame—or, gathering round the setting sun, tinged with mellow light, a dark drape-ry fringed with pearl and gold, they draw the curtains round the couch on which he sinks to rest.—

And,

“When the heart-sick earth,
Turns her broad back upon the gaudy sun,
And stoops her weary forehead to the night,
The moon, that patient sufferer, pale with pain,
Presses her cold lips on her sister’s brow,
Till she is calm.”

Then appear the midnight stars, “throbbing like pulses in the void immense;” mysterious watchers! which hint to restless man the peace and lustre of the heavenly world. Let these sketches answer, all full of change as well as beauty. The old earth turning forever on her silent axle, alternates the softer splendors of night with the gorgeous glories of the day. The seasons pursue each other in ceaseless chase.—Grim winter, locking up the streams in fetters of frost, brings forth his treasures of snow and hail, before whose brilliant crystals the secret diamond pales its light.—Spring opens her blushing beauty to the gaze, and gives way to summer, drawing her landscapes with richer colors; while grave autumn gathering her fruits, pours into the lap the ripened treasures of the year. Old ocean moans, and leaves the echo of her murmur in all her sea-shells. The free winds whisper

in soft dalliance through the ivy and the vine; or sough, in dirge-like tones, through the pines. Should we turn from nature to man himself, the earth rocks everywhere beneath his busy tread—in every grade of culture from the savage to the sage, his history presents problems yet unsolved by human wisdom. All the stores of mind are poured into a thousand jarring dialects, which shall yet mingle their discords in a higher symphony, and chant the one eternal hymn of praise to God, the maker.

This universe of thought and matter! what catalogue shall exhaust its wonders, sketched upon the horizon; which, like a moving canvass, spreads before the eye in turn all the treasures of philosophy and science! Yet it is not the simple grouping of these splendours which fascinates the mind; it is rather the resolution which science gives of all these various phenomena, and the simplicity of the final result. Under the severe inquisition of the chemist, Nature has made confession of her secret, that a few elements, not yet reduced to their smallest number, combine to give this concreté world. As a few letters in the alphabet compose the richest language, freighted with all the wealth of human thought; as the few digits, which a child may reckon upon his hand, give all the numbers of arithmetic; so these few principles give us the universe of matter. The same factors, which compose the black ore smelting in the miner's furnace, are found within the petals of the rose, or in the beads of crystal dew, glistening like pearls upon the leaves of summer. The hard granite at the earth's foundations, yields the same elements with the snow-flakes which

wreath its ragged boulders on the mountain side.

Can it then be doubted, that to learn is the province of a mind so constituted, and sustaining such relations to the outer world? The argument is simply the old argument of adaptation, as when Paley reasoned from the adjustments of the human eye. Here is the mind destitute, at birth, of all knowledge, without power to create within itself a single material of thought, and depending upon experience for all the objects of knowledge. Yet is this mind under the dominion of an imperious curiosity, which sends it forth to be an eaves-dropper and a spy, gathering secret information upon which to draw all nature within her inquisition, wresting her confessions upon the torture and the rack. It is furnished with the senses, the open avenues by which it enters the domain of nature, and walks up and down the earth. It is endowed with certain fundamental and primary faiths, antecedent to all reasoning, which are to it the "*regulæ philosophandi*," and in obedience to which it inquires with confidence and believes with certainty. Over against the mind thus equipped God hath set the created universe, full of wonders, multiple in their combination, yet simple in their elements; a vast monument covered with inscriptions of wisdom, whose mysterious hieroglyphs vex the impatient mind, and, when decyphered, offer deeper problems even to the end. Hath not God set the one against the other in the relation of subject to object, that the mind may know its mission to be the search of truth? And must not the love of that truth be the moral law to direct its findings? The blind instinct of curiosity may indeed thrust forth the

uneasy mind, uncaged and free, upon its adventures ; but truth, with her dazzling glory, must fill its eye, as, with an eagle's wing, it soars above to the very source of light and joy.

A similar proof to this, though less abstruse, is found in *the repose which belief brings to the human mind, as contrasted with the anguish of doubt*. We can give no logical definition of truth which is not subjective ; that is to say, relative to the mind which contemplates it. If we content ourselves with saying that it is "the agreement of our notions with the reality of things," then as Taylor adds, from whom this definition is taken, "as it is an *agreement* or a sameness, it implies necessarily a thing or notion, and a representation or affirmation concerning it." * If again we "define that to be truth, which the constitution of our nature determines us to believe," then it cannot be an abstract existence independent of the mind which receives it. Of course it is not meant that every belief in which the mind reposes, is true ; for this is excluded by the terms of either definition. "While the belief continues," says Dr. Beattie, "we think it true ; when we discover its falsity, we believe it no longer." † That is true, not simply what the mind receives, but what the mind receives in obedience to those fundamental laws of belief, which are the only vouchers for the true. The necessary inference from this, is, that truth brings certain repose to the understanding. There is, so to speak, a polarity of the mind itself, by which, like the mariner's needle, it turns

* Elements of Thought, Page 166.

† Essay on Truth. Page 22.

freely on its pivot of inquiry, around the whole circle of human knowledge, oscillating with every breath of prejudice, and at rest only in the magnetic meridian, pointing to truth as its pole. Doubt is to the mind

“ that dark

Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension, where length, breadth and height
And time and place are lost ; where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy.”

And no better description can be given of the mind floundering through “this wild abyss” of doubt, than Milton gives of Satan wandering through chaos, that gulf between Hell and Heaven, where

“Quenched in a boggy syrtis, neither sea
Nor good dry land, nigh foundered, on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying.”

A striking analogy holds in this respect between the reason, and other powers of the human soul. What torture does not the conscience feel, when pricked with its sharp scruples, on which it lies bleeding like the Indian Fakir on his bed of spikes! And the heart knows its bitter anguish, when foul suspicion first breathes the poisonous word which blights young love. Thus the understanding rests on truth, as conscience reposes on right, and the heart on love. What ingenious mind here has not felt this agony of doubt, the more intense when the truth sought is practical and bears on duty? Who has not felt the pains of mental travail in bringing his half formed conceptions to the birth, to give them symmetry and shape? who has not asked with Pilate, in momentary scepticism, “what is truth,” when it continually slips from his grasp

and eludes the tests he would fain apply ! Who has not turned his face in sadness to the wall, when the very questions he may raise are viewed but as confessions of his ignorance ; and he hears, still lingering in the universe, the echoes of those unanswered questions put by ancient sages ! Who that has tired of this earthly knowledge so purely relative and phenomenal, and pluming his wing to soar upwards to the contemplation of God and the absolute, has not sunk back entangled in the meshes of his own philosophy, and burdened with the speculations which are spun from his own bowels ! and who, then, has not rejoiced in that description of Heaven, which makes it the place of knowledge to the blest ; where alone we shall enjoy the vision of the good, and know even as we are known ! It is in the stead of a thousand arguments for the mind's repose in truth, that the goal of all our hopes is to reach a state, where endless progress in knowledge will be attended neither with perplexity nor toil. In Heaven, perfect rest consists with unflagging activity ; of which science gives a faint adumbration, when it shows all physical rest to be the result of constant energy, the rest which arises from the antagonism of forces. So in Heaven there will be inquiry without fatigue, and knowledge free of doubt. On earth, progress infers defect ; the mind is continually overtaking the boundaries of knowledge, and is called to the double effort of grasping present truth, and of seeking new disclosures. In Heaven, the mind with one comprehensive glance will take in all truth, within the circle of its ability ; just as the eye, with a single view, embraces all that is contained within

the horizon. By a wise and happy adjustment, when the expanding intellect is ready to raise a new inquiry, there is an equal expansion of the horizon of knowledge, instantly illuminated with the light of perfect truth. By this instantaneous graduation of new disclosures to the widening intellect, the mind is held always in a state of complacency and repose, while yet it is delighted with progress. It is a blessed marriage, here and in heaven, between the mind and truth; and here as in Heaven, must a holy love of truth be the law of their connexion.

A third consideration tending to the same conclusion, is, that *error is always poison to the mind, while truth is the food upon which it thrives and grows.* It has a power of digestion, by which every sort of truth is assimilated to itself. It is not merely the passive recipient of foreign ideas; a species of furniture with which it is adorned like the shields and helmets hung around the walls of an armory. But this knowledge, gained from without, goes into the texture of the mind itself and forms a part of its very fabric, like the food which passes into the flesh and blood and bone and muscle of the living body. By these increments of knowledge, the mind, like the body, grows from the feebleness of infancy into the robustness of intellectual manhood, and achieves the works which make men immortal. The converse of this may as easily be affirmed. To withhold truth from the mind is not simply to abandon it to primitive ignorance, but rather to utter waste and idiocy. To substitute error for truth is to visit the mind with atrophy, till it is consumed with pining sickness and decay. All this is in

strict analogy with other laws of our nature. A diseased and enfeebled frame is the sure inheritance of him who sins against his body—he that quenches the noble sentiments of the soul is abandoned to a reprobate heart—he that stifles the voice of conscience forfeits the safe warnings of this faithful monitor.—Can it be, that the understanding alone of all man's powers should be exempt from the control and rebukes of an avenging Providence? There is a chapter yet to be written in the history of Philosophy, which, considering the abundant materials for the work, it is strange should to this day be blank. It is to show, by a large induction of facts, that man may not trifle with truth, without experiencing a fearful retribution. The doom of intellectual imbecility hangs over those, whose unnatural offence it is to “change the truth of God into a lie.” Reference is not here made to those unconscious errors, which mingle like dross in all our findings. Pure truth, alas! like pure gold, is not to be found in earthly mines; and the God of truth may look with infinite compassion upon such mistakes as are but the marks of human infirmity. But standing, as we do, upon the top of eighteen centuries, we see looming out like beacons, not a few who, in disregard of the sanctity of truth, have sported with her form, and trifled with her laws; and not a few who, with malice in their hearts, have denied her glory, and sought her life. In all such cases the seal of vengeance is clearly impressed, in depriving these minds henceforth of all productive power; so that no creations of their genius are left for the admiration of mankind, and no substantive additions to the stock

of human knowledge are by them bequeathed. More ominous still is the fact, that no school ever set itself to the subversion of truth, which, in each generation, did not slide down the intellectual scale; till the power of self propagation being wholly lost, it dies from sheer exhaustion. The old Greek philosophers, their great souls embarked in the earnest search for truth, struck out those undying systems, which, with all their intermingled errors, stand forth in colossal grandeur, the proudest monuments of the human intellect: and the names of Plato and Socrates, Aristotle and Pythagoras have come down to us, as those who for two thousand years reigned with a feudal sway over the empire of mind. The sophists, on the contrary, who knew truth but to mock her—whose small ambition it was to confound and perplex, instead of to guide, have left no memory behind them but that of philosophical buffoons and jesters, burlesquing all knowledge with their coarse caricatures; and are known to History, only through the withering invectives which consigned them to an immortality of infamy.

In the early ages of Christianity, the Fathers, such as Tertullian and Justin Martyr, who threw themselves in defence upon the bosom of the Church bleeding under the blows of Pagan persecution; and those still later, as Athanasius and Augustine, who sought to settle the creed of the Church against licentious heretics—these have left the record of their labors in apologies and dogmatics, which are still the armory from which the weapons of our modern warfare are drawn. But what record has history perpetuated of the Gnostics and Manicheans, the Arians and Pelagians,

who defiled and corrupted the truth, save the extracts to be found in the writings of their christian opponents, like dead flies preserved in amber? Twelve centuries ago the Mohammedan imposture arose, partly an apostacy from truth, but partly also a protest against the corruptions of Christianity and the idolatries of paganism. In so far as it was a protest against error, it had power to propagate itself, and gave sharpness to the scimeter which soon carved its way to the empire of the East. But when it made open issue, at the foot of the Pyrennees, with the whole civilization and religion of Europe, it assumed the attitude of hostility to all truth and attempted its subversion. From this moment, its energy was paralyzed; and what has Mohammedanism since done, either in science, or in art, for the advancement of mankind? True, Arabia was for four centuries the conservator of science, and gave back to Europe at the time of the crusades, the torch of knowledge, which had been extinguished by the choke-damp of the dark ages. For be it remembered, that in the forbearance of God retribution pursues with "leaden feet," and moral causes work imperceptibly through ages in accomplishing the sublime purposes of Providence. Yet during these four hundred years of political ascendancy, in possession of a language peculiarly flexible and copious, spoken by a people acute and enterprising, what contributions has Mohammedanism made to the aggregate of human knowledge? It has converted Asiatic civilization into one vast dead sea, whose dark surface is not curled with a single ripple; and its theocratic influence has stereotyped the nations into

changeless forms, like the pillar of salt upon the plain of Sodom. At this very moment, its gigantic empire, which once ruled the earth, worn out and effete, is crumbling before our eyes, as the great stone rolls upon the Image partly of iron and partly of clay. Will these historical illustrations suffice? or, will you look last of all upon that Hebrew race, the most remarkable in their history of all that ever trod this earth? a nation, through whom mankind have gathered, in the germ at least, all they truly know of religion or law, government or worship. Yet from the sad moment when their scribes and doctors lost the key which could open the meaning of their own symbols, it has been confessedly an unproductive race. Enduring and acute, they have exhausted their intellect in the puerilities of the Talmud and the Mishna. Although at different periods placed in positions favorable to knowledge, the impress of Hebrew mind is not discovered upon a single art or science. In nearly two hundred centuries, they have added not a single truth to the mental stores of man. Mere traders and carriers in literature as in commerce, they have furnished to the world not a single creative genius; such as a Milton or a Locke, a Bacon or a Newton, a Des Cartes or a Galileo. Does all this happen by chance? Can it be accidental that, in the progress of four thousand years, sophists and despisers of truth have perished without issue? and that in no race or school which ever set itself to oppose and subvert truth, has one creative genius stood forth to make mankind richer by his thoughts? or does it prove that truth is a sacred trust from God; the natural aliment of the mind by which alone it

grows; and that next to love of God, the holiest thing on earth is love of truth?

Such, gentlemen of the *Philomathean* and *Euphemian*, Societies, are some of the general relations which truth sustains to the human understanding. It only remains for me to suggest that, like all other affections, this love of truth is susceptible of cultivation; by which it may be increased from a mere un-influential *sentiment* into a controlling and absorbing *passion*. I shall feel that I have but abused your kindness in compelling you to listen to these reflections, some of which are sufficiently dry and tedious, unless I should gain your attention to considerations a little more practical. What remains to be said on this occasion, will be directed to two points: the motives which should urge the student to cultivate this love of truth, and the obstacles which most retard its developement.

The most obvious motive *is the assistance it affords in sustaining the mere drudgery of learning*. It is not without a deep significance, the homely adage represents truth as lying at the bottom of the well; and a long, steady tug at the windlass is required to draw it forth. You yourselves are perhaps not without personal experience of Solomon's declaration, that "much study is a weariness to the flesh." Indeed, severe mental application is the imperative law of sound scholarship. In the acquisition of intellectual, as well as of mental wealth, "the hand of the diligent maketh rich;" and in the one as in the other, it is love of the treasure which sweetens the toil of acquisition. What but this refreshes the mathematician, as he

wearily plods through the rugged formulas and the uncouth diagrams, which are but the scaffolding to the magnificent science which he rears? These long and intricate calculations are the drudgery of his work, rendered endurable only by the prospective rewards which are summed up in the result. He does not rest in these; but by them ascends to those eternal relations in nature, the full value of which we scarcely appreciate when lying in the equations and demonstrations of the abstract science, but distinctly perceive when applied in physical investigations; as in mechanics, to determine the equilibrium of forces, or in astronomy to detect the laws of the stars. So with the Philologist who delves in the black-letter of some obsolete language, certainly not for the mere pleasure of disinterring forgotten roots, or of assigning specific meanings to the endless modifications of words. The end of his patient labor is not simply the syntactical arrangement of words into periods and pages, any more than it is the final end of a military drill to marshal troops into line, and conduct them through the evolutions of a mimic warfare. Although the statement may surprise you, his full reward is not attained even when the constructed language becomes the safe vehicle of knowledge, and he is able to possess the stores of thought treasured in it: for you will remember the fine sentiment of Milton, when he says, of books "they do preserve, as in a vial, the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them." Yet even this high communion with immortal minds, much as it may recompense his toil, is not the absolute reward of the true scholar. In all the

analytic and synthetic processes of Philology, he traces the operations of the mind itself, and those fundamental, unchangeable laws under which it acts. He views language, not as an arbitrary collection of symbols, into whose narrow forms the spirit of human thought has been conjured, like Asmodeus in the magician's vial; but rather as the outgrowth of the intellect itself; or better yet, as the crystallization of thought, whose symmetrical forms, rhomboid, cube and prism, it is his province to disclose. And here, without fearing the charge of impertinent digression—here, in this temple of learning, under the sanction of these venerable teachers who surround me, and of that vast academical senate, whom our imagination may easily assemble, composed of all that since the revival of letters have been charged with the business of education—here, with a sense of responsibility in the utterance, do I offer a solemn protest against that utilitarian dogma, which would ostracize the classics, and place the study of language under the ban—a reform, which, like the sturdy iconoclast of old, will not pause in its desolating march, until it has smitten down every image of beauty which the human soul has loved; and reduced us to a state of Gothic barbarism, when no study shall be of value which does not immediately minister to sense and appetite, or tend to physical development. Without, however, dwelling upon the study of the languages, as a subjective exercise of the intellect, it may safely be affirmed that the knowledge it imparts of the mind itself and the philosophy of its operations, is the great recompense of the student's labor. Instead, therefore, of curtailing this branch

of study, it would be far wiser to make the acquisition of foreign languages a constant side-employment throughout life. In my judgment, no better preventive can be proposed against that intellectual torpor which advancing age seems to induce: caused partly by the decay of those physical powers which are the organs of research; but much more by the disposition of age to dwell upon the past, which yields nothing new either for nourishment or stimulus. The inlet of new ideas through the acquisition of a language would freshen thought, so that it would pour on in one ever-flowing stream, without the possibility of stagnation. And if language be a mirror of the mind itself, in the linguist the mind dwells as in a crystal palace; beholding itself reflected from a thousand angles, by which it is re-produced and multiplied in every action and posture, and is roused from slumber by this constant self-contemplation.

This inborn love of knowledge, which sustains the patient scholar through all his tedious labors, is that also which has raised up such an array of self-educated men, who in different ages have surmounted the greatest obstacles, and achieved the proudest success. What but this raised Æsop and Terence and Epictetus from the condition of slaves to be among the most renowned allegorists, dramatists and philosophers of antiquity? What but this lifted John Hunter from the humble condition of a chair-maker to surpass all the anatomists of his day? What but this elevated Thomas Simpson from being a strolling fortune-teller, catching the first rudiments of knowledge from a pedlar's almanac, to be the mathematician,

whose name is as familiar to your ears as that of Euclid himself? and the mathematician, Edmund Stone, from being a gardener's boy, taking his first hint of the science to which he rose to the greatest distinction, from a mason's use of the rule and compass: and whose noble self-reliance was so graphically expressed in his saying to the Duke of Argyle: "a servant taught me ten years since to read; does one need, my Lord, to know more than the twenty-four letters in order to learn any thing else that one wishes?" And what but this thirst of knowledge transformed our own Franklin from a poor printer's boy, munching his crust of bread through the streets of the Quaker city, to be the first philosopher of his time?

The remarkable enthusiasm imparted to the character, illustrates still further how the love of truth sustains the philosopher in the midst of his severest toils. It is related of Sir Isaac Newton, after he had conceived the idea of extending the law of gravitation to explain the phenomena of the Planetary world, that as an "*experimentum crucis*," he set himself to calculate whether this force, with its known law of decrease in proportion to distance, was sufficient to retain the moon in its orbit, and to explain its rate of motion around the earth: and that as each figure brought him nearer to the desired result, he was so overcome with emotion that he was obliged to invoke the assistance of a friend, to conclude the demonstration which established his theory, and has immortalized his name. Such enthusiasm, it is plain, must soften the ruggedness of labor, and diffuse a glow over the coldest speculations. It is insensible to fatigue and disap.

pointment, and bears the adventurer on in triumph to the most brilliant success. It is the signature of Heaven's king, the true patent of nobility, admitting those who possess it into the noblest fellowship, next to that of the Church of God—into that great brotherhood of scholars, separated by no distance of time or space, bound together by no secret signs, but by a sacred sympathy and love of truth; a noble army of confessors, whose united voice proclaims that the pleasures of knowledge are only less than the pleasures of virtue and religion.

A second motive for cultivating the love of truth is the protection it affords against our becoming false and ambitious pretenders. Nothing is more common than to institute depreciating comparisons between our own schools of learning, and those of the old world. Yet it is undoubtedly true, that the course of instruction with us has the merit of impartiality and symmetry. It is not unusual on the continent of Europe to find grave Professors, who will give page and line of every notable passage in the ancient classics, or who will recite minutely the history of every battle fought since the days of Semiramis, who are yet ignorant of the very rudiments of physical science, and commit blunders in Geography which should disgrace a school boy. A travelled gentleman told me in conversation, not two weeks since, that he was once asked by a European Professor whether Mr. Polk had a son who would succeed him in the Presidency; while another expressed his surprise to find our countrymen with such fair complexions, because of the proximity of America to Africa.

That minute subdivision of labor which sets eighteen men to make a pin, may conduce to great excellence within a limited department of knowledge, but is surely unfavorable to enlargement of mind. It creates those intellectual monoptotes, whose solitary studies in a single branch, may, perhaps, explain that tendency to extravagance, which so greatly mars the speculative philosophy of Germany. In this country, the graduates of our colleges, if not adepts in the art of Latin and Greek versification, possess at least a fair outline knowledge of history and science, philosophy and language. Yet this wide diffusion of the mind over so broad a surface; tends to shallowness; which is the confessed evil of American scholarship. This evil too is intensely aggravated by the injudicious haste which, with us, shortens that "middle passage" between boyhood and manhood; which, however painful in the endurance, is incalculably precious for the discipline it yields. At thirty years of age, when, in Europe, the foundation only of future success is thought to be securely laid, it is not uncommon with us to find men who have played out all their cards to fortune, in the game of life. It is idle, however, to rail at evils which we do not seek to correct. The rapid development of the resources of this vast country, and the stimulus of our democratic institutions, put education, with every thing else, under high pressure; and our colleges must be good mills indeed, if bumpkins can be put in at the hopper, and be ground out finished scholars at the end of four brief years. It is, however, one of the painful consequences of our superficial, because too hasty, education, that we contend through

life with the perils which always must attend half knowledge. The natural force of intellect, aided by a fortunate conjuncture of circumstances, will often carry one, who is no candidate for fame, into a position from which there is no retreat, and which he trembles to occupy. With Byron, he wakes up some morning to find himself famous. There is scarcely any thing more painful to a truly ingenuous mind than to receive the credit for learning which he does not possess, and yet be compelled by the necessities of his position to bear the impeachment without disclaimer. A sense of degradation attaches to him, as he finds himself, however unwillingly, a party to a course of systematic deception: and he would cheerfully resign every honor conferred by the too partial admiration of friends, if he could be rated by the public at his true value. He knows not at what moment some unlucky emergency may test his deficiencies, and the fickle world tear aside the veil which itself had thrown over its own idol, and reveal the imposture which was always unsupportable to him. Retreat is impossible; with his breast to the current, he must meet his fortunes, even though disastrous; and the only remedy is to complete the knowledge which will make him equal to his destiny. In this he will never fail, if animated by an ingenuous love of truth itself. The influence of this is felt in two ways. It rouses the mind to intense activity, and renders it watchful of the hints which nature every where affords, to coin them into knowledge. Every breath which fans us, whispers some confession of mystery to the ear acute enough to hear it; and every phenomenon we behold is like the

golden bough which admitted Æneas into the mysteries of Tartarus. But all hints are lost upon sluggish minds. Thousands enjoyed the luxury of the bath before Archimedes; yet he was the first to observe that the quantity of water displaced was just equal to his own bulk; nor did he take notice of it, till it gave the clue to Hiero's problem, which led him in the ecstasy of joy to rush naked from the bath, exclaiming *eureka, I have found it.* Many eyes had seen the vibrations of a suspended lamp; but the philosophic mind of a Galileo was needed to observe the equal motions of the swinging lamp in the cathedral of Pisa, and to learn from it the oscillation of the pendulum as a perfect measure of time. Apples too have fallen from the trees, ever since the time when Adam sat under their shadow in Paradise—yet only to the attentive mind of Newton did it occur to reason, that the same power would have brought it from a position a thousand times as high; and why may it not extend to the moon? How soon the splendid conjecture was realized, and gave to the world the true theory of the Heavens, is known to all. Common minds indeed, even with the aid of the happiest suggestions, may not expect to walk in the path of discovery—yet it is astonishing how even these may be enriched by a watchful attention to all that passes within and around them. In reading our most popular and striking authors, Mr. Macaulay for example, nothing is more wonderful than the cormorant appetite with which things most crude and strange have been devoured, and the facility with which these are converted into apt and beautiful illustrations. A child's

horn book, or a fairy tale—Cinderella's slipper, or Aladdin's lamp—nothing comes amiss; and from their copious reading, springs such an affluence of illustration, as makes their writings sparkle with life and beauty. Where knowledge is thoroughly assimilated to the mind, and is reproduced with the stamp of a new coinage, the freshness of individuality, for practical uses, answers nearly the ends of true originality.

The sincere love of truth will, however, not only wake the mind to observation and research, but will render it too earnest and thorough to be satisfied with half-knowledge. The spade and shovel will surely open to the light the secret vein, which the hazel rod has once detected; and the miner's shaft will sink deeper and deeper, till the exhausted quarry has yielded the last trace of precious ore hid within its womb. The hearty inquirer is thus not only lifted above the artifice of the charlatan, but is secured from the shallowness of the sciolist; and will not cease his wooing, until admitted to the full embrace of truth.

But the most persuasive of all motives, which I shall only suggest without expansion, is, that *truth is the only imperishable wealth which a man may hope to bear with himself into the Eternal world.* Death sweeps away all our material possessions; but can it be that the mind, like the body, is then stript of all its furniture, and goes undressed and bare into the presence of God? If the faculties, developed through a long course of discipline on earth, retain their proportions; which seems to be involved in the very notion of retribution beyond the grave; surely the knowl-

edge through which this growth has accrued, must also be retained. If too, as we have continually assumed, through the outward and concrete forms in which knowledge is here presented to us, the mind is seeking for those ultimate and universal principles which underlie them all, surely these, when once abstracted and generalized, when once incorporated into the very substance of the mind, will abide the wreck of matter, and survive those outward forms which they once penetrated, as the soul which gave them life.— If nature too be a great book, on every page of which God has written the proofs of his being and glory, as with his own finger he wrote his law on the stones of Sinai, how shall the pious mind at death separate its knowledge from its holiness? No! it were a melancholy thought, if in our undressing for the tomb, we laid our knowledge as our garments by! The weary student, in his moments of toil and doubt, feels the stimulus of hope, when he reflects that God creates nothing useless on earth: and that his most unproductive thoughts will be the germinant seeds of knowledge,

“The sproutings of an harvest for Eternity, bursting through the tilth of time.”

I will tax the patience of this audience but a few moments longer, while with rapid touches, I present a few of those obstacles which retard the development of this love for truth. The first is *apathy*, that *vis inertiae* of the mind, which holds it, like the sloth, in a repose as silent and deep as death. He must look forth upon nature, with the dull, heavy eye of an ox, who can see neither beauty in the rainbow, nor poetry in the stars; and whose sluggish soul is not roused to inquiry, by aught that it beholds.

34 *The Love of Truth, the Inspiration of the Scholar.*

"A common mind perceiveth not beyond his eyes and ears;
The palings of the park of sense enthrall this captured roebuck:
Externals are the world to him, and circumstance his atmosphere."

Plainly, truth will shine as cold upon such a soul, as the sunbeam upon a Polar iceberg. You must bring nature, like a charged battery, to bear upon such a torpid mind; and shock after shock must be repeated, until the electric spark shall enkindle the dormant life to spontaneous activity, before it shall be capable of knowledge, or be the conscious subject of such a law, as love of truth.

Akin to apathy, is *the moral indifference to truth when ascertained*; which is in fact the negative pole to that love of truth we are now considering. It is the absence of all emotion in the presence of what is most sublime; the absence of all affection in the presence of what is most lovely. This indifference to truth is worse even than bigotry. The one is the entire vacation of all moral sentiment, of which the other is only a misdirection. The bigot offends, because his hatred of error is more prominent in our view than his love of truth; but the indifferentist is abominable, because he can rise neither to the one nor to the other. Error and truth are but blank forms, where he may write just what interest or caprice shall dictate. He is a poor soulless wretch, without a single affection which he can share with any living thing: whom all men unite in denouncing, not because he is an apostate from this faith or that; but because, in the denial of all faith, of all virtue and of all truth, he is an apostate from mankind and from God.

But more disturbing than both combined, is the *influence of prejudice*; because more universal and less

suspected. Truth, in itself considered, is one and indivisible; and to minds capable of taking in its whole compass, would doubtless so appear. This, however, is the prerogative of God alone. To finite minds, truth loses its *apparent* unity, since they travel over it by successive discoveries. Yet the correspondence between these discoveries is proof of a *real* unity. For not only do truths not oppose or overlap each other, it is only when viewed in their reciprocal relations, they are truths at all. Truth indeed *is* truth, only when taken in its proper combination. If by an intellectual chemistry its elements are separated, these often prove as destructive as the compound was wholesome; just as a grain of corn, nutritious in itself, may yield a poisonous element by secret distillation. The errors of mankind arise not so much by wilful departure from recognised truth, as from neglecting its correspondencies. It is one of the "thoughts" of Blaise Pascal "*il y en a plusieurs qui errent d'autant plus dangereusement, qu'ils prennent une verite pour le principe de leur erreur. Leur faute n'est pas de suivre une fausse te, mais de suivre une verite a l'exclusion d'une autre.*" * Thus, we may in our imagination follow a ball thrown into the air, regarding simply the angle of projection; but we shall be pursuing an imaginary straight line, while the ball, under the influence of gravitation and the resistance of the atmosphere, will describe the parabolic curve. From all this arises the necessity of candor in the search for truth. Prejudice, which always springs from partial views, must

* Penses de Pascal. Seconde partie, article xvii.

not be suffered to warp the mind by its antecedent presumptions. Alas! what schisms has not this fell spirit created among the followers of that truth, which is by confession, "homogeneous and proportional!"—The mathematician, priding himself upon the rigid deductions of his favorite science, smiles in disdain upon the probabilities of the moralist, and the speculations of the metaphysician; who reciprocate the scorn, by contrasting the variety and acuteness of their discriminations with the tread-mill monotony of the other; while the Professor of "the Humanities" boasts against the ruggedness of both, the elegance and polish of his peculiar study: and all forget that together they but unite to give the full equipage of the scholar. What babblings and contentions between Philosophers, each of whom measures the arc of his own little segment in the great circle of truth! The naturalist will find you a shoulder-blade of some ancient megatherium, and forthwith will build up, not only the whole frame in its gigantic proportions, but will discover, hid in the socket, the evidence that it lived somewhere in those vast geologic ages, long anterior to the time when "God made the beast after his kind, and the cattle after his kind." Or he will ask only for the scale of some disinterred ichthyolite, or the vertebra of some defunct animal, to establish as many centres of creation, as shall contradict the book which testifies from God, that He "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Who can forbear reciting in the ears of these jarring Philosophers that exquisite passage of Milton in his plea for the liberty of unlicensed printing—a

passage which is as touching for its pathos, as it is commanding in its eloquence: "Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on: but when he ascended, and his Apostles after him were laid asleep, then straight arose a wicked race of deceivers, who, as that story goes of the Egyptian Typhon with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good Osiris, took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds.— From that time ever since, the sad friends of truth, such as durst appear, imitating that careful search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall do, till her master's second coming: he shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection." And we say of those men of science, who will not recognise the unity of truth, as Milton said of licensing prohibitions; they must not "stand at every place of opportunity, forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking, that continue to do our obsequies to the torn body of our martyred saint." * * * * "They are the troublers, they are the dividers of unity, who neglect, and permit not others, to unite those dissevered pieces, which are yet wanting to the body of truth." * "The love of truth," says a living writer, "is honesty of reason, as the love of virtue is honesty of heart." And prejudice in Philosophers is like the folly of those

* Milton's Prose Works, vol. I. p. 185.

two famous knights, who meeting upon opposite sides of a shield, broke a lance between them; one affirming it to be silver, and the other gold, till when rolling in the dust, they discovered it was both. Many a sore battle would be saved between the followers of truth, if they would take time and patience to look upon both sides of her shield.

Upon the last obstacle to be mentioned here, I would like to pour all the burning lava of Mount Etna, but must dispatch it in a single sentence. It is *that despicable utilitarian spirit*, which, like a hucksterer in the shambles, is always haggling with truth about her price. The great souls of earth have always known that "the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold:" they have always known that truth is far more precious in herself, than in the special uses to which men may put her. Even Franklin, the very impersonation of the practical philosophy, who has left in the sayings of Poor Richard, as much penny wisdom as any other; even he did not fly his kites in the heavens to make the lightning merely the minister of man. What Aristotle said pre-eminently of Philosophy holds true subordinately of every science, "as we call that man free who belongs to himself, and who belongs to no other, so philosophy is alone of all sciences free, for it only is to itself its own aim." For though the other sciences were not free, in his view, in that they were subordinate to "that sovereign science, Philosophy, which was made to govern all others;" yet they are free and independent, in respect to the particular application of them to the common routine life of man.

Gentlemen, I must shut down the gate upon the flood of this discourse, lest it swell into too copious and broad a stream. Yet it grieves a preacher to contravene professional rule, in cutting off the uses and application of his doctrine. In bidding you adieu, let me urge that all life be your school time: for in leaving these walls you only enter upon other forms of study and under other masters, though men and things should be your text books. Be students to the end; and even in death, when ministering angels shall draw aside the curtain which veils a future world, your spirits will be learners still. Let the love of truth be the law of your intellect; remembering ever that the wisdom, which is "more precious than rubies," finds its beginning in the fear of the Lord.

"Few and precious are the words which the lips of wisdom utter:
To what shall their rarity be likened! what price shall count their worth!
They be drops of the crystal dew which the wings of seraphs scatter,
When on some brighter Sabbath their plumes most quiver with delight;
Such, and so precious, are the words which the lips of wisdom utter.

As the fumes of hallowed incense that veil the throne of the most High;
As the beaded bubbles that sparkle on the rim of the cup of immortality;
As wreaths of the rainbow spray from the pure cataracts of truth;
Such, and so precious, are the words which the lips of wisdom utter.

They be grains of the diamond sand, the radiant floor of Heaven,
Rising in sunny dust behind the chariot of God:
They be flashes of the day-spring from on high, shed from the windows of
the skies;

They be streams of living waters, fresh from the fountain of intelligence:
Such, and so precious, are the words which the lips of wisdom utter.

Wherefore, Friend and Scholar, hear the words of wisdom;
Whether she speaketh to thy soul in the full chords of revelation,
Or in the teaching earth, or air, or sea; in the still melodies of thought
Or, haply in the humbler strains that would detain thee here."