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AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

SECOND PAPER

As a nation we are fast losing that reverence for the powers that be which is enjoined by Holy Writ, and without which no form of government can be lasting, no political system can take a firm hold upon the affections of the people. The opposition press teems with vituperation and personal abuse of those whom the people themselves have chosen to control the public policy and administer the public affairs. The incumbent of the Presidential chair, so far from receiving that respect and deference to which his position entitles him, becomes the victim of slander and vilification, from one portion of the country to another, on

the part of those who chance to differ with him in political sentiments. Even beardless boys, taking their cue from those who, being older, should know better, are unsparing in the use of such terms as 'scoundrel,' 'fool,' 'tyrant,' as applied to those whom the people have delighted to honor, either unconscious or utterly heedless of the disgust with which their language inspires the older and more thoughtful. And thus it has become a recognized fact that no man's reputation can withstand the trial of a four years' term of service in the Presidential office. While this is in a great measure the reaction from the king worship of the Old World, it is nevertheless a blot upon our civilization, a departure from those lofty and noble sentiments which characterize every advanced stage of human intellect, in which the supremacy and inviolability of the law is acknowledged, and in which the ruler is reverenced as the representative and impersonation of the law. And as, in such a stage, respect for the magistrate and the law mutually react upon each other, so in the present state of affairs the tendency is, in the course of time, to reach from the ruler to the edict which he administers, and thus to beget a disrespect and disregard of law itself, paving the way to that violence and mob rule which, in the present state of humanity, must inevitably attend the establishment of the democratic principle.

The remedy is to be found in reform in the education of our youth, whereby the utmost respect for the law and for those by whom it is administered shall be inculcated as the groundwork of all patriotism and national progress, while at the same time

cultivating a loftier appreciation of the blessings of social order and harmony, and of well-regulated liberty of thought, speech, and action, and a purer standard of right. Yet even this will be of little avail except in connection with the abatement, through the strong good sense of a thinking and upright people, of that national nuisance of bitter and unmerciful political partisanship of which we have spoken, all of whose tendencies are to evil, and so removing from the eyes of our youth a low, unworthy, and degrading example, which they are too prone to follow. The child will tread, to a great degree, in the steps of the father, and the whole course of his intellectual life be governed, more or less, by the principles and prejudices which he is accustomed every day to hear from the lips of a parent, who is necessarily the teacher and, in a great measure, the moulder of his infant mind. How careful, then, ought every parent to be of the principles which he inculcates and the examples which he sets in his conversation, especially when that conversation is directed to a condemnation of the motives or the acts of the ruling powers!—lest the child be some time inclined to enlarge upon his views, and carry his deductions farther than he himself ever dreamed, till he shall finally be led into a contempt of the institutions as well as of the rulers of his native land, through a father's teaching, and so grow up an embryo traitor, ready at the first signal to embark in any revolutionary scheme or wild enterprise of visionary reform, such as have been and are still the disturbers of our national prosperity. For an example of such a result

in our day we have but to look at the youth of the Southern States, whose fiery treason, far exceeding that of their elders, is nothing more than the outgrowth, the legitimate extension and development of that bitter denunciation of rulers who chanced to be unpopular with their fathers, of that unrestrained license of speech which left nothing untouched, however sacred, however holy it might be, which chanced to stand in the way of gross and sordid interest. The ideas of the hot-blooded, fire-eating Southern youth of to-day, the recklessness and the treason, the denationalizing spirit of revolution and blood which so readily manifests itself in contempt of the old flag, and the direst hatred of all that their fathers held sacred and laid down their lives to sustain—all this is but the idea, intensified and developed, of the Southerner of a bygone generation; it is but the natural deduction from his conversation and life, pondered over by the child, fixed deeply in his heart as the teaching of a revered tutor, and carried out, by a natural course of reasoning, to its extreme in the parricidal rebellion of to-day. And yet that idea was, in its inception, apparently harmless enough, being nothing more than that denunciation and vituperation of the political leaders and the ruling powers which chanced to be in the opposition, whereby the child was in due course of time weaned from his country, and taught to look lightly upon and speak lightly of that which of old time was only mentioned with love and reverent awe.

Nor is this the only reform which is needed in the education of our youth. The phrase 'completing one's education' is used

to-day with utter looseness, and applied to that period when the youth leaves the school or college for the busy walks of life. How much of error is contained in such an application of the term he well knows who, after some years of world life, can look back upon his college days and see what a mere smattering of knowledge he gained within the 'classic shades,' and how poorly *educated* he was, in any and every sense of the word, how ill fitted for the realities of work-day life, when first he emerged in self-sufficient pride from the sacred walls, and launched boldly out upon the world. At the time when, according to the popular acceptation of the term, the education is completed, it is in truth but just begun; and he who, upon the slender capital of college lore, should set himself up for a finished man, one competent to take upon himself the duties, responsibilities, and labors of active life, would soon find to his sorrow that he was yet but a babe in wisdom, and yet needed a long and severe discipline ere he could be considered one of the world's workers. In the few years devoted, in our country, to the education of youth, little more can be done than to teach them the value of knowledge and the proper method and system of its acquisition, leaving to the exertions of the after years that education of the mind and development of the intellectual powers which constitute the finished man. And this should be the object of all our schools, for females as well as for males, to inculcate the truth that the true education begins where the schools leave off, and depends entirely upon the scholar himself, aided only by that groundwork

of preparation, that systematizing of effort, imparted by the tutor in the tender years. This end should be ever before the teacher's eyes, and the whole course of study adjusted with a view thereto. And the instruction imparted should be of such a character as most thoroughly to fit the student for future study, giving him a firm foothold upon the most essential branches of knowledge, from which he may advance steadily and securely when left to himself; frequently warning him that this is but the beginning of great things, and that the abstrusities of wisdom, wherein is all its æsthetic beauty and its holiness—all its moral good—lies far beyond, where it can only be reached by the most patient, persevering, and unremitting toil; not forgetting, at the same time, to point out the glorious reward which awaits the seeker of truth. The effect of such a system would soon be felt, not only in our national life, but in our very civilization. For thus would be thrown out upon our society, year after year, a class of thinkers, of earnest, working, strong-minded men and women, searchers after truth and disciples of the highest good, instead of the crowd of half-fledged intellectual idlers who yearly emerge from our schools with the conceited idea that the course of study is finished, the paths of investigation fully explored, and that life is henceforth a holiday from study. Under such a giant impulse our society could not but advance with enormous strides in all that pertains to true civilization, since thinkers would then be the rule instead of the exception, and talent almost universal, which is now, like angels' visits, comparatively 'few and far between.'

This is no Utopian vision: it is a reality within the scope of human exertion and the capacity of our people of to-day, if men would but exert themselves to such an end, and properly apply the energy and labor which is now too often excited upon unworthy and trifling objects. The realm of knowledge is so boundless that a lifetime is little enough and short enough to give to mortals even a smattering of that sea of wisdom which swells around the universe, and he alone can claim to be a seer who devotes the whole of a long existence to the investigation of truth; and only when this fact is impressed upon the minds of youth can they be made to appreciate their true position in existence, and made efficient workers in the great cause of humanity.

Yet all education is vain, all intellectual development is of little benefit, all civilization hollow in its nature and ephemeral in its duration which lacks the moral element. And by the word *moral* in this connection is intended to be understood not only what is usually conveyed in the term morality, but also all religion. It is a well-established fact, more particularly exemplified in our own history, that all political parties founded upon an ephemeral issue, inevitably disappear with the final adjustment of the questions upon which they are based, having nothing left to rest upon, so it is in the affairs of nations. In the weakness of human nature and the fallibility of all human prescience, no system or theory can be devised which shall endure through all time, which shall not become effete, useless, and even erroneous in the progress of human development, and in the ever-shifting

condition of human society. Hence any government and society founded upon a system of merely human devising, must, in the progress of events, fall to pieces, and give place to the results of a new and younger development. The law of God, as contained in Divine revelation, is alone unchangeable, unmodifiable. It is adapted to meet the requirements of all lands and all ages, to answer all the necessities of which human nature is capable, even to its extremest verge of development. Hence all political systems are durable only in proportion as they, in their organization, conform to the precepts of Divine law.

We have used the term 'moral element' as necessarily comprehending all religion, for the reason that upon religion is necessarily based all true morality. There is nothing in the physical, and more especially in the intellectual world, without a final cause; and that so-called morality which exists entirely separate and distinct from religion, can be based upon nothing other than self-interest, which, under different conditions and circumstances, would as unhesitatingly lead to evil. The 'moral man' without religion could as easily be evil minded and dissolute in a community purely evil as he is upright and honorable in a civilized and enlightened community of to-day, for the reason that his morality is nothing more than deference to a certain standard of honor—in other words, to the *tone* of the society by which he is surrounded, bringing with it all the benefits of high public estimation and a lofty position in society, which tone it must follow, be it good or bad: it is founded and built up in self-

interest. Yet this very tone of society, and all these standards of honor and uprightness, when traced to their origin, are found to arise from the precepts of revelation. We are all, physically and intellectually, the creatures of circumstance. Experience moulds and develops the intellect. Our moral natures are not innate, but solely and entirely the result of the influences by which we are surrounded. There is in the soul no absolute standard of right; if there were, uprightness would be the same the world over. But the right of the heathen is a different thing from that of the Christian; the right of the Chinese or the Japanese is a different thing from that of more enlightened nations; the right of one Christian community is different from that of another; and this because right, considered distinct from religion, is relative, and subject to all the modifications of different conditions of society. The 'Evil, be thou my good' of Milton's Satan is a delicate recognition of this fact. But absolute right is a thing unknown to human *nature*; it can never be innate, but comes from without. It can only be apprehended by the intellect as a thing of God, a part of His nature, given to us as a law, a rule of action, which we can accept or not, taking upon ourselves the consequences of its rejection. There can be no standard of absolute right other than the law of God; there can be no other invariable and eternal rule of human action.

And if this position be true of individuals, most assuredly is it true of nations, which are but individuals in the concrete, subject to the same vicissitudes, governed by the same laws, physical

and moral, and following the same path of development. Only that form of government which recognizes the Supreme Being as the chief of rulers, and His law as the source and model of all human law, can be sure of truth and justice on its side, both in its dealings with other nations and in its regulation of its own internal affairs. Only such a form can work steadily for the advancement of its people, both by leading them forward and by smoothing the rugged path to perfection, and removing every obstacle which impedes the national progress. However near the principles of our Government may approach to those of the Divine law, there is still room and urgent necessity for reform. Yet, in the universal disfavor into which theocracies have fallen, and in the intense desire which pervades our people to avoid the complicated evils of a union between church and state, every attempt to unite religious principles with those of government is looked upon with positive alarm; and justly so, since the experience of past centuries proves that both thrive best in separate spheres, however near they may approach each other in the abstract, and that when united, the one is apt to prove a hamper on the other, through the introduction of error and corruption; while, separated, they act as a mutual restraint, each tending to control the abnormal development of the other. For these reasons reform in this particular must move from the people to the government, not from the government to the people.

And here we come to the root of the whole matter, to

the field where reform is most needed, that is, in the moral condition of our society. While there are few nations in which there is such a diversity of religious views and multiplicity of religious sects, there are few peoples which are so proverbially irreligious as our own. Yet our condition in this respect is rather a neutral one than otherwise, for while we are without any positive immorality which should make us preëminent above other nations for vice, there is, nevertheless, in our midst, little of that simple, trusting, unquestioning faith, which is the 'substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen'—little of that all-pervading and all-powerful reverence for sacred things, that deep religious feeling which forms a portion of the very life of most of the nations of the Old World. This is nothing more than the reaction of the stern Puritan tenets of the colonial times. It is the logical result of those dark and gloomy theories which aimed to make religion not only unpalatable but absolutely repelling to the young and the ardent, causing them to fly to the opposite extreme of throwing aside religion to 'a more convenient season,' when the pleasures of life should have lost their charm, and they themselves should be drawing near the close of their pilgrimage. That theory which made a deadly sin of that which was at worst but a pardonable misdemeanor and perhaps wholly innocent in its nature, could not fail in time to react violently, first through the process of disgust, then through that of inquiry, and finally to the carrying of speculation to extremes, and practically pronouncing harmless and innocent

that which was really vice. The popular mind, rebounding from the Puritan ideas, did not pause to discriminate between the truth and error which were so intimately mingled in their system, but, sweepingly denouncing all the theories whose most prominent characteristics were revolting, involved in the denunciation and rejection much of pure and simple truth, and ran rapidly along the path of revolution, heedless of every warning, unchecked by the obstacles which Truth threw in its way, down to the present time of almost universal looseness.

Another effect of this rebellion of the national mind against the Puritan theories is seen in the almost yearly inauguration of some new sect in religion, in a land which is already so crowded with diverse and antagonistic religious organizations that it might be termed the land of sects. However right or wrong in a religious point of view, the Puritans committed the great *social* mistake of establishing a new church, instead of working earnestly to reform the old in those respects in which it seemed to them to have fallen into error, thereby destroying the unity of the Christian world. Had the movement stopped here, less harm would have been done; but it was not of the nature of things that it should be so. The establishment of the principle that purity of worship and of belief was to be sought, and diversity of religious opinion to be gratified in separation and the erection of new organizations, rather than in the endeavor to purify the old and established form, at once threw wide open the door of schism, and with it, in the end, that of scepticism. The movement

once begun could neither be checked nor controlled by any human effort. Others claimed the right which they themselves had exercised, and the result was soon seen in the separation of one after another denomination from the Puritan Church, each, in its turn, to be divided into a score of sects, according as circumstances should alter religious views. Were the principles of true religion in themselves progressive, were the teachings, of the gospel inadequate to or unfitting for all possible stages of human progress, or were they capable of development, the world might then have been the gainer. Or, again, were reason infallible, the separation of the churches would be an incalculable blessing, by securing to all minds a free investigation upon religious subjects. But infidelity desires no more powerful coadjutor than human reason in its freest exercise, because it is so liable to be led away by sophistry, and its invariable tendency is to reject as myths and fables all things which it cannot comprehend or for which it cannot see a material cause. Perfect reason is the twin brother and strongest supporter of faith; but reason as it exists in the present development of humanity is its most deadly antagonist. The age of reason has fallen upon us, and its result is seen in a practical scepticism pervading the whole of our society, which in its extent and its injurious effects put to the blush the wildest speculations of the most radical German metaphysicians. Every day we see around us men of no religious profession, and little if any religious feeling, calmly facing death without a tremor, without a thought of the awful beyond. And though the

application of the term infidel to such a man would not fail to arouse his fiercest indignation, his indifference to the events and the fate of the great hereafter can arise from nothing else than an utter disbelief in the teachings of Holy Writ, in the truths of Christianity. Such men are but types of a class, and that class a very large portion of our population.

The evils of religious divisions are plain to be seen, even if they consisted in nothing more than the division and consequent weakening of Christian effort. The church of God, torn by internal dissensions, becomes almost powerless for the spread of the gospel, the greater portion of its strength and energy being exhausted in bolstering up its different branches as against each other, and in proselytizing within itself. Where, if united, a small portion of its wealth and energy would suffice to support in a nourishing condition the worship of a great people, leaving an immense surplus to be directed to the evangelization of the heathen world, now, in its divided state, its power and immense material resources are squandered in the support of innumerable fragments, each one of which costs as much in labor and in means as would suffice to sustain the religion of the whole country if united.

Worse than even this, the incessant bickerings of the Christian world tend to invalidate, in the minds of the unbelievers, not only among the heathen, but among ourselves, the teachings of that Word which is its professed guide. The 'See how these Christians hate each other!' is to reflecting minds outside the church's pale,

an almost unconquerable argument against that religion which professes to be founded upon love. Hence arises a great portion of that practical infidelity of which we have spoken, and which is the bane of our civilization. No nation can be truly great or noble or progressive without religion, and by as much as we are departing, in our every-day life, from the pure teachings of the gospel, by so much are we tending to our inevitable downfall. The people must have some high standard of moral excellence, something to elevate and purify the tone of society, to lead their aspirations upward away from the petty toils and cares and vexations, from the sordid desires and the animal propensities of life, in order to prevent them from falling into that decay which is inevitably the result of corruption, following hard upon a devotion to mere self-interest. We are, in a great measure, a nation of materialists, too much devoted to the pursuit of selfish and so-called practical aims, too little to the spiritual and the ethereal. Reform must come, else the soul will become gross and grovelling, and the nobler part of our natures, the more delicate and refined sympathies of the heart, the finer faculties of the intellect, will rust away with disuse, and the whole race become sensual, and finally effete, however brilliant may be its individual exceptions. From what direction the needed reform is to come it is not for us to say. That Almighty Providence which overrules an erring world will doubtless provide a way for the regeneration of His people. The first great step is to awaken the people to a sense of the necessity of such a change, and some more powerful means

must be employed to the accomplishment of that end than have ever yet been applied to our civilization. And the apostle who, in the hands of God, shall be the means of arousing the slumbering faith of our people, of awakening them to a full sense of the danger, and of imparting new energy to the recuperative powers of the race, will win for himself a loftier position in the world's appreciation than has yet been conceded to any mere mortal.

Another great and manifest evil in our society, and one closely connected with that of which we have just spoken, is the inordinate love of wealth, and the elevation of the money god to the highest seat in our temple of worship. Human nature craves distinction. The divisions and castes in the society of the Old World, from the present day back to the remotest ages, is not only an evidence, but a practical exemplification of this fact. The abolition of all these distinctions consequent upon the establishment of our republican government upon the ground of political equality, swept away from our ancestors almost the only means of gratifying this innate propensity. A hard-working, practical, agricultural people, with no literature, and little if any cultivation of the fine arts, there was but one road to distinction open to the mass of the population, and that lay through the avenues of wealth. Hence it was but natural that affluence should take the place of the hereditary honors of the olden times, and that the people should bow to the only distinction, however spurious it might be, which elevated any portion of themselves above their fellows. With all the evils connected with a hereditary

aristocracy, the distinction which attends upon a nobility is in a great measure an ideal one. It is not either its wealth or power which constitutes its charm, but a certain nameless something pertaining to the ideal, which affects not only the tenants and retainers, but even our republican selves. It may well be questioned whether we have been the gainers by substituting for such distinctions a gross and material one, affecting the bodily senses alone—the animal part of our nature—and which contains little either to expand the mind or exalt the aspirations. With us but comparatively few can become distinguished in the ranks of literature or of art, or, indeed, in any of the higher or intellectual branches of human attainment; hence for the great mass there is but one road to distinction, one object to claim every exertion—the pursuit of wealth. And as a natural consequence, we see every art, every profession hinging upon this motive. Most of the evils connected with the administration of our public affairs, the fraud and corruption which are so prominent, the quadrennial scramble for place, with its consequent degrading of those positions which should be those of the highest honor, may be traced to this one source. More than this, we find the so-called aristocracy of our great cities—a moneyed one purely—excluding from its ranks those who earn their livelihood in the pursuit of literature and art, and who, if true to their professions, are entitled to the very highest rank in society. There are of course exceptions, but not more than sufficient to prove the rule. A striking exemplification of the power of wealth among us is seen in these days of shoddy,

when those who have hitherto moved in the humblest circles suddenly take their positions among the 'upper ten thousand,' and are treated with a deference to which they have all their lives been strangers, by virtue of a successful contract or a towering speculation. The effect of such a state of things upon our civilization is easy to be seen. A low motive is sure to bring down its followers to its own level. A people without a lofty and ennobling object is sure to fall into decay. The grasping spirit which everywhere pervades our society is fast lowering our people to the level of a race of mercenary jobbers. Truth, justice, honor, purity, and even religion, are in a great measure lost sight of in the general scramble for gold, until the strictest integrity, the most self-sacrificing honesty, are beginning to be looked upon as marvels, and we have won for ourselves among the nations of the world the unenviable title of worshippers of the 'almighty dollar.' Religion itself is twisted and distorted into every imaginable shape to bring it into harmony with our all-absorbing pursuit: all our ideas of public policy and of social progress are made to depend upon and modified by this unworthy motive. We mean not to include those individuals who, with loftier motives and a true appreciation of man's spiritual capabilities, are prominent among us, battling earnestly in the cause of true progress; we are speaking of the mass of our population. Those few are the goodly leaven who are yet to prove the regeneration of our race. Bad as is the state of affairs in this respect, it will, if left to itself, become infinitely worse as each succeeding year rolls around,

for the spirit of greed is progressive in its nature, growing fatter and fatter upon its success.

Yet, in another point of view, this same strife for wealth is one great secret of American prosperity and progress. It is the motive power to that energy which has peopled the wilderness, erected as if by magic a mighty republic among the savage wilds, and, above all, spread American ideas, and with them the germ of human liberty, over the whole broad earth. To this spirit of greed upon our shores the Old World owes much of its advancement and most of those useful inventions which are fast revolutionizing humanity itself. But we are not considering it in this light; we are viewing it in its moral aspect, that respect in which it most strongly affects true civilization, which must soon fall away and lapse into the condition of the ages long past, if it be not sustained by an enduring moral and religious element. The moral advancement must keep pace with the intellectual, else the latter will some day reach that point where extremes meet, and have its weary journey to commence again.

It is to be hoped that this evil is already on the wane. It is to be hoped that the present stirring up of our society from its uttermost depths, with its consequent exploding of worn-out theories, which have hitherto held their places only through our national lethargy—with its sweeping away of old-time prejudices, and mingling together of elements which have hitherto existed distinct and aloof from each other, will result in bringing true merit to the surface, in awakening our people

to a loftier appreciation of the good and the true, thereby establishing a higher moral standard among us; that purer motives will henceforth actuate our society. The fears which are entertained by some that the present war will prove a severe shock to our civilization, are not sustained by the facts which are everywhere appearing around us. The frequent demands upon the generosity and forbearance of a great people, the constant calls for the exercise of the noblest qualities, the most self-sacrificing devotion, and that too in support of a great principle rather than of any present material interest, the very necessity for an exalted civilization and intellectual development on the part of the masses, which shall enable them to see in that principle the groundwork of all their future well-being, both as regards material prosperity and political position, are constantly bringing before the people, in a clearer light than ever before, the blessings of honor and uprightness, the necessity of national purity, and developing a moral element in our midst, whose good effects will far outbalance the ephemeral and spasmodic immorality and vice which a state of war usually engenders. Our people are *becoming acquainted* with those blessings of individual well-doing and those principles of philanthropy to which they have for so long been comparative strangers. And it is this, together with the unveiling, through the present convulsion, of those errors, both in our political system and in our society, which have so nearly proved our ruin, which will make this war in very truth the greatest blessing that has ever befallen us. And if this moral

progress shall be such and so great as to throw down the golden calf from his throne and make the place of honor the reward of true merit alone, then shall we have cause, for the remotest generations, to thank God for this seeming calamity which has fallen upon us.

And these same facts, standing out as shining lights in the darkness, tend to show that we are, after all, not quite so sordid as we seem; that, with all our worship of the money god, there is yet, away down in the great American heart, a wealth of strong, true, generous feeling, ready at the first call of sorrow and of suffering to spring forth and scatter its golden blessings even beyond the seas. It is not alone that, years ago, when we were at peace and at the height of prosperity, many ships left our shores laden down with food, the voluntary contributions of the American citizen to his starving brethren of the Emerald Isle; though this of itself was enough to place our civilization on a level with that of the most polished nation of the Old World. But even now, when we are struggling for our very existence, when every energy and every material resource is being exerted to stem the tide of internal dissensions and crush out the hydra of internal treason; at a time when the mother country has gone to every length short of open war to aid and assist those who are striving for our downfall, and her press is exhausting every epithet of vituperation and scurrilous abuse of us, who are battling so earnestly in our own defence, and who are entitled by every truth of human nature to her warmest sympathy—a press

which, adopting the phraseology of its Secession friends and allies, scruples not to place the civilization of the slaveholding States far in advance of that of the 'Northern mudsills'—even now, when the cry of the starving operatives of the English mills comes to us across the water, forgetting for the time all the abuse and maltreatment we have received, all the enmity and bitter hostility which the traitorous perfidy of England has engendered, more than one full-freighted vessel has left our ports bearing grain to those whom their own proud aristocracy is either powerless or too niggardly to sustain. Is this not evidence of a civilization considerably advanced beyond any which history has yet recorded?—a civilization based upon the golden rule of Christianity, and upon that still more precious command: 'Love those that hate you, and do good to those that persecute you.' For it is in its moral aspect that every civilization must in the end be judged; and that society which develops such noble principles and feelings as these, which manifests itself in this higher region of spiritual excellence, in the exercise of these finer feelings of the heart, is certainly nearest to perfection, in that it follows most closely the law of God, the truths of divine revelation. When instances such as these occur on the part of any of the older nations of the world, it will do for them to boast of a civilization superior to ours; but until their faith is shown by their works, suffering humanity the world over will accord to us the palm. Nor will it answer to ascribe to us an unworthy motive in this matter—a desire to win credit in the

eyes of the world. An individual might, with some degree of plausibility, fall under such an imputation, but a great people does not move spontaneously and unitedly in one direction from such a motive, since none but a pure and just principle can produce unity in the masses. Such an unworthy and degrading motive is the property of individuals, not of nations, even if it were possible for such an idea to be conceived at one and the same time by a multitude of minds. No! it was the spontaneous expression of a deep and pervading principle of American society—of American humanity—a free outpouring of the American heart; and as such it will stand upon the page of history as the evidence of a civilization behind none of its age.

Nor is this the only mark of the moral awakening of our people. Instances are every day appearing in our midst of this truest of charity, not the least of which are the 'wood processions' of the Western cities and towns; those long lines of wagons laden with fuel and provisions for the families of the absent soldiers, whose sole object and motive is the comfort of those whose protectors and supporters are sustaining the country's honor in the field; evidences more striking than the founding of charitable institutions or benevolent societies, since the latter may, and too often does, arise from the most selfish and vainglorious motive, while in the former the individual is lost in the many who press eagerly to bear their part in a noble work, in this spontaneous outpouring of true and heartfelt benevolence. From this same spirit arises the wonderful success which attends the efforts of

sanitary commissions and soldiers' aid associations in alleviating the sufferings and softening the privations of our soldiers in the field. With such evidences constantly appearing before our eyes of the deep and noble feelings of the American heart, who can doubt that our civilization is a progressive one, our enlightenment equal? Who can doubt the capacity of the American people for good, or look with foreboding upon our future?

Another important sign of the times, as evincing our advancing civilization, is the revival of art in our midst. In the midst of all our bustle and toil and eager strife for gain, there has ever been a something wanting to the completeness of our life, a something to fill and satisfy that yearning of the soul for æsthetic beauty, which is at once an evidence of its progress and its capacity for diviner things. Too long have we been absorbed by the desires of our animal nature, in whose pursuit there is little gratification to that finer portion of our inner selves which will not be silenced by anything short of the deepest degradation. The people—the great people—need something—something higher, more ennobling, more tender—to fill the vacant spot in their hearts and homes, to preserve the balance between the animal and the spiritual part of their lives, and to clothe their surroundings with a higher and holier significance than can arise from the events and associations of the work-day life. In art the missing link is found, and whether it be the simple ballad in the evening circle or the modest print that graces the humble cottage walls—and the humbler the habitation

the deeper the manifestation, because the more touching—it is but the expression of the people's appreciation of the needs, the capacities, and the holier aspirations of the better part of humanity. Hence the revival of art has a deep significance; it is something more than a forced, an exotic, and hence ephemeral growth; it is the manifestation of the awakening of the people to the æsthetic sentiment; it is the actual result of the intellectual and moral needs of society; it is in itself the striving of a great people for the beautiful and true. And as such it has a broad and deep foundation in the godlike in human nature, which shall insure not only its permanence but its progress as long as the good and the true have any influence whatever upon our society. That we have had, until a comparatively late period, no art among us, is the result not of a lack of capacity to comprehend the beautiful, but of the intense and all-absorbing passion for gain which has so nearly proved the bane of our society by shutting out the consideration of better things: that art has so suddenly revived in our midst is a proof that, so far from having our humanity, our political position, our very civilization itself swallowed up in the love of the almighty dollar, as has been predicted of us by foreign wiseacres, we have been aroused to our danger and to a true appreciation of the better part of existence; which is itself an evidence of the elasticity and the recuperative energy of our social system.

In literature our progress is not so flattering. In its effects upon civilization a literature can only be judged by that portion of it

which touches the popular heart, which descends to the humblest fireside, and is most eagerly sought after by the ploughboy and the operative. All other, however brilliant it may be—and the more brilliant or profound the farther it is generally removed from the minds of the masses—is to them but as the stars of a winter night, cold and distant, radiating little warmth to the longing soul, too far away to awaken more than a faintly reflected admiration. He who said, 'Give me to write the songs of a people, and I care not who makes their laws,' touched the tender spot in the great heart of humanity; he was a sage in that truest of philosophy, the study of human nature. Though we have our princes in every branch of literature, who are the result of and an honor to our civilization, yet for their own results in moulding the tastes, the habits, and the intellects of the common people, in contributing to their advancement, they fall far below the efforts of the veriest penny-a-liner. It is a lamentable fact of our society that while the more solid literature scarcely pays, the flashiest of so-called 'flash literature' brings down the golden shower. The writer of the lowest possible order of literary productions is enriched, and his name is familiar in the remotest corners of the land, while our monarchs of literature are oftentimes poverty stricken and comparatively obscure; and that because the latter is confined to a comparatively small audience and patronage, while the former speaks to and for the masses; and, as a natural consequence, the former controls the tastes of the greater portion of the reading community, and that too for anything but good,

since he reaps his golden harvest by pandering to the basest of appetites, the lowest of sensibilities and sympathies; thus retarding rather than accelerating the intellectual advancement of the people, this being his material interest.

And how great is the responsibility of those who thus speak to the ear of the simple and the unlearned! how terrible the retribution they are heaping up for themselves in the great hereafter, for thus prostituting talent which might be made eminently useful in leading the minds of the common people to the highest and noblest of truths; in making purer and better in every sense of the word! The idea that the province of literature, even of fiction, is simply to amuse, is exploded in the light of advancing civilization. Every writer has a higher mission, and accordingly as he discharges the duty which his faculty lays upon him, is he true or false to the true end of his existence, a success or a failure in the world of intellect and morality. The mission of all literature is to make mankind both wiser and *better*, and the writer who fails to appreciate and act upon this truth is worse than a useless cumberer of society; he is a curse to his age, and, however great his present fame, will most assuredly be forgotten with the passing away of his generation. For does not *all* human effort resolve itself into this one thing? Is there any work which we call good or great, or even important, which is not intended in some way to benefit mankind? Else we were but butterflies, and our works but mists. In the past ages the world has not seen and appreciated this fact; but the world of to-day does appreciate

it, and will certainly set every worker upon his proper pedestal, high or low, according as his efforts have conduced or not to the welfare of humanity.

Present reform in this particular is not to be looked for; it must be external rather than internal. Could the whole mass of light literature be at once and forever swept out of existence, the people would soon acquire a love of solid reading as ardent as that which now pervades the lower stratum of our society for 'yellow-covered' trash. For the love of knowledge is innate, and the people would necessarily seek for and find amusement in such reading as could not fail to instruct and educate, to revive this love of knowledge, and fan it into an ardent flame. But this cannot be done. The people will ever seek that reading which is most congenial to their present tastes and habits, and there will ever be found a legion of those who are eager to supply this sort of mental pabulum—if it can be so called—for the sake of the golden equivalent. For these reasons, the literature of the common people must ever follow, not lead, their civilization; it must continue to be the outward and visible sign of their progress, instead of the inward and spiritual grace by which it is pervaded and sustained; and reform must be inaugurated and consummated in those other influences which tend to mould the moral man, and which must be so guided as to destroy all these low and grovelling tastes, by lifting the man into a higher plane of being, in which the animal shall be wholly subservient to the spiritual. Hence the province of the true philanthropist lies in

those other paths which we have pointed out, rather than in this, since in them lies the prospect of success whose *fruits* will in this most clearly appear.

It is a significant fact that the foreign view points to but two blots upon our society, and that foreign detractors harp continually upon these, and these alone, as evidences of the backwardness of our civilization—the institution of slavery and the riots which occasionally disgrace our large cities. For in the light of the facts and experience of to-day, such a position is simply a yielding of the whole question. When it is considered that the few riots with which we are afflicted—few in comparison with those which so often convulse European society—are almost invariably incited and sustained by our foreign population, and that portion of it, too, latest arrived upon our shores, it will be seen with what injustice the evil is laid at the door of American society. It is, in fact, nothing else than the outbreak of the long-accumulated and long-suppressed discontent and misery of European lands, which, for the first time for centuries, finds vent upon the shores of a land of political and social liberty—a reaction of the springs long held down by the iron hand of tyranny—a violent restoration of that natural elasticity which had so nearly been destroyed by ages of social degradation. The mob law, the frequent resort to the pistol and the bowie knife, and the universal social recklessness of our own citizens of the Southern States, is the effect of the institution of slavery, and falls within the discussion of that question, with the

disappearance of which they must inevitably depart.

Were African slavery a permanent feature in our midst, the argument against our civilization would be unanswerable. But it has maintained its ground in spite of, rather than as the result of or in connection with the spirit of our institutions. It has hitherto been suffered to exist as an acknowledged evil, solely because the disastrous results attending its sudden abolition have been justly feared as greater than any which could at present arise from its continuance. Yet at no period has the American people ceased to look forward to some future time when it might safely be rooted out. Our faith has ever been strong, and our confidence in the ultimate triumph of the right unshaken. That time has come. The present war, from whose inauguration the question of slavery abolition was—on our part, at least—entirely absent, has given the opportunity which our people have not failed to seize. To crush out the rebellion without meddling with the institutions of the South was at first the main spring of the war; *fiat justitia, ruat cœlum*, is now the voice of the whole people; and the very fact that the nation has so earnestly taken hold of the work, so sternly determined to sacrifice everything but its existence to the demolition of this bloody god, is of itself an evidence of the purity of our civilization. We have not been dead to the principles of truth and justice involved in this question; we have been but biding our time, plainly seeing and carefully noting the direful effects of slavery upon our social organization, and 'heaping up wrath against the day of wrath.' And now, with the blessing

of God upon our efforts, the present war will not cease until the death blow is given to the accursed institution with all its attendant evils. We, as a people, are fully aroused and sternly determined henceforth to let nothing stand in the way of our social advancement, however time-honored and cherished may have been the obstacle. And when these evils have all been swept away, as they assuredly will be, we shall stand forth among the nations in all the glory of a pure and enlightened civilization, and challenge the world to produce a nobler record, to point out a happier, more prosperous, more truly progressive people.

With the close of the present war will arise another important question, bearing not less strongly than that of slavery upon our ultimate civilization. The slaveholding States are to be, in a measure, repeopled. The tide of immigration which has so long and so steadily streamed toward the West will be for some time diverted to the fertile plantations of the South. Not only the soldiers of the North, to whom the war has opened what has hitherto been to them almost a *terra incognita*, will seek new homes within the sunny climes; but the flood of foreign immigration, which, upon the vindication of our national integrity and power, will quickly double itself in comparison with that of former years, and sweep toward this new and inviting field; and the distinctive feature of Southern society —of so-called 'Southern chivalry'—will soon be swallowed up in the torrent. And what then shall we have to fill its place? The crude ideas of foreign tyros in the school of freedom, the

conflicting religious, social, and political theories of European revolutionists, the antagonistic policies of a hundred different nationalities. All this, in connection with the difficulties arising from the freeing of so large an African population, will prove a severe trial to our national civilization, and call for the exercise of the profoundest wisdom, the most careful discrimination, and the most patient forbearance on the part of our rulers and statesmen. And most assuredly the times will themselves produce the men most fitted for the care of such interests and the decision of such questions. Though there is need of the firm hand, the utmost watchfulness, and the strongest exertion on the part of every citizen as well as statesman, it is not to be feared that the result will in the end be disastrous to our progress. For the genius of the American people was never yet at fault. We have handled similar questions before; we are handling a more important one now, and our capabilities and our power of development are such that we need not fear but that we shall be enabled to cope with the exigencies of the future. That genius which has built up a powerful nation here in the wilderness, which has developed to such a degree the resources of the laud and the capacities of the people, which has conceived and executed in so short a time such a social and moral revolution, has in it too much of the godlike to suffer the work to fall through from any incapacity to deal with the legitimate consequences of its action. The power to inaugurate and carry through the work necessarily implies the capacity to establish and render permanent its results, to guide

the ship when the storm is past. It will find the ways and means; the times themselves will develop new truths, which will make the task less difficult than it seems to us of to-day. Such is the feeling of the people; and this same noble faith and confidence in our own capacities, this turning a deaf ear to all the possibilities of failure, and looking with a never-failing trust, a soul-felt faith, to the triumph of our cause and of our civilization, is our greatest strength, while it is, at the same time, a conclusive evidence that we are on the high road of true progress, that our civilization is not a thing of yesterday, to-day, or to-morrow, but of the eternal ages.

APHORISM.—NO. X

'It is a frequent result of poverty to make men rich—a common curse of wealth to make them poor.' Poverty, making us feel our dependence upon God, almost compels us to an acquaintance with Him—this leads us to accept Him as the one Infinite Benefactor; and so gives us wealth that can never fail: but riches, by encouraging our natural love of independence, is too apt to keep us away from our Heavenly Father, and thus plunge us into such poverty as admits of no actual relief. In this view there is something to hope for in the present distresses of our country. Rarely have so many people felt that their dependence must be upon the mercy of God; and rarely, if ever, have so many, with such earnestness, appealed to the Father of all on the occasion of a widespread calamity. This must result in a closer union with the Infinite Giver, and thus in a great increase of true riches.

THE ENGLISH PRESS

V

How had *The Times* been getting on all these years? Slowly but surely. At first, as has been already stated, feeling its way with difficulty amid a host of obstacles, long-established and successful rivals, Government prosecutions abroad, and personal crotchets and peculiarities at home. John Walter, its founder, retired from the management of the paper in 1803, and died in 1812, having lived to see his literary offspring grow up into a strong young giant, with thews and sinews growing fuller and firmer every day, tossing his weighty arms in every direction, but never aimlessly; and with his vigorous feet firmly planted, expanded chest, and head boldly erect, fearlessly standing forward in the very first rank of the champions of freedom. Mr. Walter's son John succeeded him in the management in 1803; and, under his abler and more enlightened administration, the paper rapidly increased in importance. He opened his columns to all comers, and whenever any communication appeared to possess more than average ability he endeavored to engage the writer of it as a regular contributor. He perfected the system of reporting, and the reports in *The Times* soon began to be fuller and more exact perhaps even than Perry's in *The Chronicle*.

He especially turned his attention to the foreign department of his journal, and no trouble or expense was spared in obtaining intelligence from abroad. This had been one of the strong points with the elder Walter, and he had always striven to be the first to communicate important foreign news to the world—thus, for instance, *The Times* was the first newspaper which announced the execution of Marie Antoinette. This element was now greatly strengthened and developed, correspondents were engaged in all the chief cities of Europe, and, as time progressed, in other quarters of the world as well, letters from whom appeared as regularly and as early as the post-office authorities would allow; and a regular system of expresses from the Continent was organized. But the Government, who saw and felt the growing greatness of *The Times*, placed every possible hinderance in the way—it was not then the custom for the Premier to invite the editor to dinner—and the letters and foreign packages were delayed in every possible manner—the machinery of the custom house being even employed for that purpose—in order that the Government organs might at least get the start. But fair means and foul alike failed to win over the young journalistic athlete to the ministerial side, and this illiberal and selfish policy was at length compelled to give in, beaten at all points. But there was one thing which was destined to give *The Times* supremacy, at which the younger Walter began to work soon after the reins of power fell into his hands—and that was steam. Great strides had been made in the art of printing. The first metal types

ever cast in England were those of Caxton, in 1720. Stereotype printing had been first suggested by William Ged, of Edinburgh, in 1735, and was perfected and brought into general use by Tillock, in 1779. The printing machine had been originated by Nicholson, in 1790, and an improved form of it, made of iron, the invention of Earl Stanhope, was in general use in 1806. Thomas Martyn, a compositor of *The Times*, invented some further modifications, and was aided by the younger Walter. Owing, however, to the violent opposition of his fellow workmen, the experiments were carried on under the greatest secrecy; but the elder Walter could not be induced to countenance them, and consequently nothing came of them. In 1814, Koenig and Bauer, two German printers, conceived the idea of printing by steam, and the younger Walter, now by his father's death permitted to do as he liked, entered warmly into their project. The greatest silence and mystery was observed, but the employés of *The Times* somehow or other obtained an inkling of what was going on, and, foreseeing a reduction in their numbers, vowed the most terrible vengeance upon everybody connected with the newfangled invention. Spite of their threats, however, the necessary machinery was quietly prepared and erected, and one morning, before day had broken, Mr. Walter called his printers together, and informed them that that day's issue was struck off by steam. This ever-memorable day in the history of journalism was Monday, the 28th of November, 1814. Loud murmurs and threats were heard among the workmen, and burning down the

whole affair was the least thing suggested; but Mr. Walter had taken precautions, and, showing his work people that he was prepared to meet any outbreak on their part, no violence was attempted. Since then *The Times* has been regularly printed by steam. Various improvements in steam machinery have from time to time been patented, and Hoe's gigantic machines—the production of that country the most prolific of all the world in useful inventions, America—seemed to show that the limit of the application of steam to printing had been reached. But a machine still more wonderful—a machine that possessed all the skill of human intelligence and ten times the quickness of human fingers—a machine for composing by steam, was shown at the International Exhibition in London, in 1862. Printing by steam at once raised the circulation of *The Times* enormously, as was but natural, from the facilities which it afforded of a rapid multiplication of copies; and under the editorship of Thomas Barnes it soon reached the first place in journalism. But Walter himself was not idle, and was always on the lookout for fresh and rising talent. On one occasion, being at a church in the neighborhood of his country seat in Berkshire, he was very much struck by the sermon which was preached by a new curate. After the service he went into the vestry, and had a long conversation with the preacher, the result of which was that he told him that a curacy was not a very enviable position, and that he would do much better to go to London, and write for *The Times* at a salary of £1,000 a year. It is needless to add that the offer was not

declined.

In 1817, *The Literary Gazette* was brought out by William Jordan, as an organ of literature and the fine arts, and, until The *Athenæum* was established, it was without a rival of any consequence. But its circulation declined, and, after Jordan's death, dwindled down to a very small number. In 1862 its name was changed to *The Parthenon*, or rather, to speak more correctly, *The Parthenon* arose as a new publication from the ashes of *The Literary Gazette*. But change of name did not produce change of circumstances, and, before many numbers had appeared, *The Parthenon* was privately offered for sale at the low sum of £100, but, failing to meet with a purchaser, it gave up the ghost early in 1863. In 1817, Lord Sidmouth made a terrific onslaught upon the press. He issued a circular to the different lord lieutenants of the counties, to the effect that any justice of the peace might issue a warrant for the apprehension of any person charged with printing a libel. One result of this circular and the vigorous prosecutions which ensued was that William Cobbett for a while gave up printing his *Political Register*, and went away to America, from whence he did not return for two years. He stated his reasons for adopting this course in his paper, as follows:

> 'I do not retire from a combat with the attorney-general, but from a combat with a dungeon, deprived of pen, ink, and paper. A combat with the attorney-general is quite unequal enough; that, however, I would have encountered. I know too well what a trial by special jury is; yet that or any

> sort of trial I would have stayed to face. But against the absolute power of imprisonment, without even a hearing, for time unlimited'—an act had been passed which gave the secretary of state power to suspend the *habeas corpus* act —'in any jail in the kingdom, without the use of pen, ink, and paper, and without communication with any soul but the keepers—against such a power it would have been worse than madness to attempt to strive.'

But the Government met with a notable check in the case of William Howe, the bookseller. Howe was thrice tried for libel, and, despite the exertions of Lord Ellenborough, who descended from the judicial bench to the barrister's table, was thrice acquitted. Persecution after this languished for a while, but in 1819 were passed those stringent measures which are known as the Six Acts. One of these gave the judges the power, upon the conviction of any person a second time of the publication of a seditious libel, to punish him with fine, imprisonment, banishment, or transportation. But such monstrous enactments were not suffered to pass unchallenged, and the result of several animated debates was that the obnoxious words banishment—a novelty in English jurisprudence—and transportation were withdrawn, but the remaining provisions of the Six Acts were carried in all their rigor. But amid much harm, some good was doubtless effected, for certain provisions were introduced into the act which declared certain inferior newspapers, which had hitherto evaded the stamp act, by calling themselves pamphlets and not newspapers, because they only commented upon the

news of the day, to be henceforth liable to the stamp duties. This really did good service to the better class of journals, by sweeping away a swarm of newspapers which, by the quibble above mentioned, were enabled to undersell them.

John Bull was started in 1820, with the avowed object of espousing the King's side, and covering the Queen and her friends with obloquy. Theodore Hook was the editor, but very few persons were in the secret. Every man or woman who was conspicuous as a friend of the Queen was duly gibbeted, and any tittle-tattle gossip or scandal that could be ferreted out against them was boldly printed in the most unmistakable terms. Trial for libel failed to discover the real proprietors, editor, and writers, and the men who stood their trial as printer, publisher, proprietor, etc., were manifestly mere shams, men who would swear to anything and undergo any amount of imprisonment for the consideration of the smallest coin of the realm. The scandalous details in *John Bull* attracted the public at once, and by the time it reached its sixth number, the circulation had risen to ten thousand, while the first five numbers were reprinted over and over again, and the first and second were actually stereotyped. But it began to be whispered about that Hook was the editor, whereupon he printed and signed a letter denying the rumor in the most indignant terms. This letter was supplemented by an editorial, from which the following is an extract:

> 'The conceit of some people is amusing, and it has not unfrequently been remarked that conceit is in abundance

> where talent is most scarce. Our readers will see that we have received a letter from Mr. Hook, disowning and disavowing all connection with this paper.... We are free to confess that two things surprise us in this business. The first, that anything which we have thought worthy of giving to the public should have been mistaken for Mr. Hook's; and secondly, that such a person as Mr. Hook should think himself disgraced by a connection with *John Bull*.'

After the death of the Queen, Hook devoted himself to the demolition of the Whigs and Radicals. Joseph Hume was his especial target, and was dished up week after week with a decidedly original Latin garnish: '*Ex humili potens*—From a surgeon to a member of Parliament;' '*Humili modi loqui*—To talk Scotch like Hume;' '*Nequis humasse velit*—Let no one call Hume an ass,' etc., etc. *John Bull* sustained a great many convictions for libel, and its dummies were frequently imprisoned, but they never betrayed Hook, who retained the editorship until his death in 1841. Somewhere about this time *The Britannia*, a Conservative journal, of a few years' standing, was incorporated with it. It had meanwhile considerably moderated its tone, and at the present day enjoys a fair circulation among steady-going people—chiefly country gentlemen, old ladies, and parsons—who obstinately cling to Tory principles.

John Bull was not the only newspaper which was prolific in libels, and perhaps at no time were scandalous attacks upon public and private persons more common. Mr. Freemantle, writing to the Marquis of Buckingham, in 1820, says:

> 'The press is completely open to treason, sedition, blasphemy, and falsehood, with impunity.... I do not know whether you see Cobbett's *Independent Whig*, and many other papers now circulating most extensively, and which are dangerous much beyond anything I can describe.'

This is a sweeping censure, but, allowing for a little personal irritation, natural enough under the circumstances—he had been lampooned himself—is true of a great portion of the press. The supply was regulated by the demand, and the character of the wares purveyed depended upon the wants of the market. Editors found that scandal was eagerly devoured by their subscribers, and they did not therefore hesitate or scruple to gratify the prevailing tastes of the day. But the better class of papers were not able to keep clear of the law of libel, even though they did not condescend to pander to the vitiated tastes of the multitude. Many of them had to sustain actions for merely reporting proceedings before the police magistrates and in the law courts, and many a rascal solaced himself for the disagreeables attending a preliminary examination at the police court for a criminal offence, by a verdict in his behalf in a civil action against any newspaper that had been bold enough to print a report of the proceedings. This kind of action originated from a ruling of Lord Ellenborough, that it was 'libellous to publish the preliminary examination before a magistrate previously to committing a man for trial or holding him to bail for any offence with which he is charged, the tendency of such a publication being to prejudice

the minds of the jurymen against the accused, and to deprive him of a fair trial.' This monstrous and at the same time absurd doctrine remained in force for many years, but is now happily no longer the law of the land.

The Times had now reached the pinnacle of prosperity, and its claims to be considered the foremost of journals were no longer disputed. The circulation of *The Morning Chronicle* had dwindled during the latter years of Perry's life, and after his death did not revive very much under Black, his successor. Brougham, Talfourd, and Alderson were among the writers in *The Times*, and Captain Sterling, whose vigorous, slashing articles first gained for *The Times* the title of the 'Thunderer,' was regularly engaged upon the staff at a salary of £2,000 a year and a small share in the profits. But the Government still steadily set its face against it, and in 1821 Mr. Hume loudly inveighed against the ministry in the House of Commons for not sending Government advertisements to *The Times*, instead of to other journals, which did not enjoy a tithe of its circulation. The arrangements of the post office were a great hinderance to the diffusion of newspapers, since the charge for the carriage of a daily journal was £12 14*s.*, and for a weekly £2 4*s.* a year. The number, therefore, that was sent abroad by this channel, either to the Continent or our own colonies, was very small. In 1810 the whole number thus despatched was but three hundred and eighty-three, and in 1817 it had fallen to two hundred and seventy-one, owing to the increase in the charges demanded by

the post-office authorities, who were actually allowed to put the money in their own pockets; and in 1821 it was only two hundred and six. The circulation through the kingdom of Great Britain itself was not entirely free, inasmuch as every newspaper sent through the post office was charged for by weight, at an exorbitant rate, unless it was franked by a member of Parliament. This regulation continued in force until 1825, when an act was passed which provided that newspapers should be sent through the post free, on condition that they were open at both ends, and had no other writing upon the cover than the necessary address. At the same time the ridiculous acts which limited the size of newspapers were done away with, and every printer was henceforth permitted to print his journal upon any sized sheet he pleased. Two important concessions were also made to the press at this date, one in the House of Commons, and the other in the House of Lords. In the former, a portion of the strangers' gallery was set apart for the exclusive use of the reporters; and in the latter, reporters were permitted to be present for the first time. Previously to this, if any one had been rash enough to attempt to take any notes, an official would pounce upon him, and, with an air of offended dignity well befitting that august assembly, strike the offending pencil from his grasp!

In 1825, Joseph Hume attempted to get the stamp duty reduced on newspapers to twopence, and the advertisement duty to one shilling; and in 1827 he tried to gain an exemption from the stamp act for political pamphlets; but he was defeated on

each occasion. In 1827, *The Standard* was started as a Tory organ, under the auspices of a knot of able writers, the chief of whom were Dr. Giffard, the editor, Alaric Attila Watts, and Dr. Maginn. It has always possessed a good connection among the Conservative party, but has never been a very profitable concern. After the abolition of the stamp duty its price was reduced to twopence, and in 1858 to one penny, and it was the first of the daily journals to offer a double sheet at that price. In recent times the Letters of 'Manhattan' have given an impulse to its circulation, from their novelty of style—an impulse which was probably further aided by the ridiculous but widely believed assertion that those letters had never crossed the Atlantic, but were penned beneath the shadow of St. Paul's.

The following statistics of newspapers in the chief countries of Europe in 1827, will probably prove interesting: France, with a population of—in round numbers—thirty-two millions, possessed 490 journals; the Germanic Confederation, with a population of thirteen millions, 305; Prussia, with a population of twelve millions, 288; Bavaria, with a population of four millions, 48; the Netherlands, with a population of six millions, 150; Sweden and Norway, with a population of four millions, 82; and Denmark, with a population of two millions, 80. Great Britain, with a population of twenty-three millions, far outstripped them all, for she boasted 483 newspapers; but was yet compelled to yield the palm to her Transatlantic kinsmen, for the United States, at the same date, with a population of

twelve millions, circulated the unequalled number of 800. In looking at these figures, one cannot help being struck with the enormous disproportion between the journals of Roman Catholic and Protestant countries—a disproportion which is so significant that comment upon it is unnecessary. But the difference is still more plainly shown if we take two capitals. Rome, with a population of one hundred and fifty-four thousand, possessed only 3 newspapers, while Copenhagen, with a population of one hundred and nine thousand, enjoyed the advantage of having 53. The London papers were 100, the English provincial papers 225, the Irish papers 85, the Scotch 63, and the Welsh 10. The number of stamps issued was more than twenty-seven millions, of which London alone consumed more than fifteen millions; the number of advertisements was seven hundred and seventy thousand, of which London supplied nearly a half; and the amount of advertisement duty was £56,000, of which London contributed £22,000.

The year 1829 is remarkable for the first appearance of *The Times* with a double sheet, consisting of eight pages, or forty-eight columns. This great step in advance must have quite answered the expectations of its spirited proprietor, for in 1830 *The Times* paid to Government for stamps and advertisement duty no less than £70,000. The day of perfect freedom was beginning to dawn upon the press, although it took a quarter of a century to remove the last fetter, the stamp, and still longer, if we take into consideration the paper duty, which was removed

in 1862. First came the abolition of the most oppressive portion of Lord Castlereagh's Six Acts, next the advertisement duties, and finally the stamp. The high price of the stamp, fourpence, kept the better journals at sevenpence, but a numerous class of unstamped journals at twopence sprang up in defiance of the law, and were allowed for a time to go on unchecked. They had a large circulation, one of them, *The London Dispatch*, attaining to twenty-five thousand a week. Growing bolder with their impunity, they indulged in the most abominable trash and the most frantic sedition and treason. They were of course prosecuted and punished, but they were never finally destroyed until the reduction of the stamp duty. They did good indirectly, for they formed one of the strongest arguments in favor of the abolition of that obnoxious impost.

In 1833 a battle royal raged between Daniel O'Connell and the press; but, as might have been expected, Dan was no match for the hydra-headed antagonist he had been rash enough to provoke. The quarrel originated in a complaint made by the Liberator of a misrepresentation of a speech of his, and he did this in so intemperate a manner that the reporters published a letter in *The Times*, in which they expressed their determination never again to report a speech of O'Connell's until he had apologized for the insults he had levelled at them. O'Connell vainly attempted to put the machinery of the House of Commons in motion against them, but, after repeated efforts, was obliged to give in. His attacks were principally levelled at *The Times*—which then

counted among its contributors the brilliant names of Macaulay, Thackeray, and Disraeli—for he and John Walter were bitter foes. But he evoked several powerful defenders of the press, first and foremost among whom was Sir Robert Peel.

In 1834 the system of condensing the speeches in Parliament, and placing the summary before the leading articles, was first introduced into *The Times* by Horace Twiss. At this date there occurred a great schism between the proprietors and writers of *The Sun*, some of whom seceded, and brought out *The True Sun*, in opposition to that eccentric planet which always rises in the evening despite the general conviction of mankind that the sun is the luminary of the day. Douglas Jerrold, Laman Blanchard, and, greatest of all, Charles Dickens, commenced their apprenticeship to literature in this journal, which enjoyed, however, but a fleeting existence. Jerrold afterward started a paper of his own, which failed, and then became editor of Lloyd's *Weekly London Newspaper*, a post which he retained until his death, and which has since been ably filled by his son Blanchard Jerrold. Laman Blanchard became the editor of *The Courier*, but resigned it when it became a Tory organ, and was one of the original writers in and proprietors of *Punch*. Dickens transferred his services to *The Morning Chronicle*, in the columns of which the Sketches by Boz first appeared. Several acts of Parliament relating to newspapers were passed at this period. In 1833 the advertisement duty was reduced from three shillings and sixpence to one shilling and sixpence in England, and one

shilling in Ireland. In 1834 an act was passed by which the newspapers of those foreign countries in which English journals were admitted free of postage, were allowed to enter Great Britain on the same terms. In 1835 a bill was passed to relieve the press from the action of common informers, and placed them under the jurisdiction of the attorney-general alone; and another, which forbade newspapers to publish lectures delivered at literary and scientific institutions, without the permission of the lecturer.

The time was now fast approaching for the reduction of the stamp duty. Government was getting wearied of the war with the hydra-headed unstamped monster, and at last adopted the only expedient likely to be successful in putting it down, which was to place the higher-class journals in a position to rival them. From 1831 to 1835 there had been no less than seven hundred and twenty-eight prosecutions, of which the year 1835 alone had produced two hundred and nineteen. This fact, joined to the influential agitation which was now being made for the repeal, caused the Government to decide upon bringing in a measure of relief. It took six months and an immense deal of speechifying to bring this measure to maturity; but at last, in 1836, the stamp duty was reduced from fourpence to one penny, being one halfpenny less than it had been originally fixed at in 1760. The Tories were the great friends of this reduction, and Lord Lyndhurst, who had been instrumental in abolishing many of the most oppressive enactments with which the measure had been clogged, wished to do away with the duty altogether. There

was of course a loss to the revenue at first. In the first half year of the new duty, the number of stamps issued was 21,362,148, realizing £88,502. In the corresponding previous half year, under the old scale, the number of stamps had been 14,874,652, and the amount paid, £196,909, so that in six months the number of stamped newspapers had increased by about one half.

In 1837, *The Economist* was started by John Wilson, and attracted great attention by its statistical and politico-economical articles, Wilson afterward became secretary of the treasury, and, having been sent to India, died there, to add one more to the many illustrious victims that our Indian empire has exacted. In 1838 a most amusing hoax was perpetrated upon *The Morning Post* and *Morning Chronicle*, which announced the death of Lord Brougham, and published a most elaborate biography of him. But the next day there came a letter from Lord Brougham, declaring that he was still alive and hearty. The joke, however, did not end here—for people were ill natured enough to assert that he had been the author of the rumor himself, in order to learn what the world would say about him; and so widespread had this second rumor become, that Lord Brougham was compelled to write another letter contradicting it.

The next great event in the history of journalism is the commercial libel case, Boyle *versus* Lawson, the printer of *The Times*. Barnes had died, and had been succeeded by John T. Delane, a nephew of Mr. Walter, as editor, who still continues to occupy that responsible post. The matter originated thus: In May,

1841, *The Times* published a letter from the Paris correspondent, containing the particulars of an organized system of forgery on a gigantic scale, which had been agreed on by certain persons, whose names were published in full. The plan was to present simultaneously at the chief Continental cities letters of credit purporting to emanate from Glynn & Co., the London bankers. The confederates had fixed the sum they meant to realize at one million, and had actually secured more than £10,000 before the plot was discovered. One of them was Boyle, a banker, of good position, at Florence, and he brought an action for libel and defamation. He pressed on the trial, but *The Times* maintained its ground, and at an enormous expense despatched agents all over the Continent to collect evidence. *The Times* triumphantly succeeded in proving the truth of what it—*The Times* is always spoken and written of as an individual—had printed; but as the old law—the greater the truth the greater the libel—still existed, the jury were compelled to find a verdict for the plaintiff, which they did, with one farthing damages, and the judge clinched the matter by refusing the plaintiff his costs. Universal joy was expressed at the result of the trial, and public meetings were called together in London and the chief Continental cities for the purpose of making a subscription to defray the expenses of *The Times* in defending the action. The proprietors, however, declined this, but said that, at the same time, they should feel much gratified if a sum of money were raised for some public object in commemoration of the

event. Accordingly it was decided to found two scholarships in perpetuity for Christ's Hospital and the City of London School at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, to be called the Times' Scholarships, and the nomination to them to be placed in the hands of the proprietors of *The Times* in perpetuity. Two marble tablets were also voted, at the cost of a hundred and fifty guineas each, with commemorative inscriptions, one to be placed in *The Times* office and the other in the Royal Exchange. Two somewhat similar tablets were also placed in Christ's Hospital and the City of London School. For these purposes the sum of £2,700 was very quickly subscribed, the lord mayor leading off with ten guineas. If anything had been wanting to place *The Times* upon the pinnacle of preëminence among journals, this famous trial firmly established it there, and ever since it has been looked up to as an oracle of the commercial world. But *The Times* was not contented to rest quietly on its oars. It was ambitious, and looked farther afield. In 1845, its vigor, enterprise, and disregard of expense were exemplified in a remarkable manner. *The Times* had been in the habit of sending a special courier to Marseilles, to bring its Indian despatches, and thus anticipate the regular course of the mail. The French Government threw every possible obstacle in the courier's way, and *The Times* took Lieutenant Waghorn, the originator of the Overland Route, into its pay. In October, 1845, a special messenger met the mail on its arrival at Suez on the 19th. Mounted on a dromedary, he made his way, without stopping, to Alexandria, where Waghorn awaited

him with a steamer. Waghorn came *viâ* Trieste—special post horses and steamers and trains being ready for him at the various points of the route—and he reached London on the morning of the 31st, in time for his despatches to appear in the morning's issue of the paper. The result of this was that *The Times* reached Paris with the Indian news from London before the regular mail had reached that city from Marseilles. The next noticeable enterprise of *The Times* was the sending out commissioners to investigate the condition of the poor and laboring population of London in 1847, an enterprise which was crowned with the moat satisfactory results. *The Times* has always been the firm friend of the poor, and its columns are always open to the tale of distress. No case is advocated until it has been thoroughly investigated; but when once it has been mentioned in *The Times*, subscriptions pour in on all sides. At the commencement of each year especially, *The Times* publishes gratuitously appeals from public charities, and during last January the sums received through those appeals reached the large amount of £12,000. The last great exploit of *The Times* was the sending forth a special correspondent with the English army to the Crimea, a precedent which it has followed up since in China, India, Italy, America, and Schleswig-Holstein. But this was not the first occasion that reporters had accompanied our armies, for Canning despatched reporters with the troops sent to Portugal in 1826. The tactics of *The Times* are very generally misunderstood and misrepresented. Whatever objections cavillers and opponents may urge, and with

truth too—for the course taken by *The Times* is not to be praised on all occasions—it cannot be denied that *The Times* is the first journal in the world, a position which it has reached by its enterprise, vigor, and ability. It has frequently proved its disinterestedness, and during the great railway mania of 1845, while it was receiving no less a sum than £6,000 weekly for advertisements, constantly cautioned its readers against the prevailing madness, and persistently predicted the crash that was certain to follow. *The Times*, while it appears to lead, in reality waits upon public opinion, and hence the accusations of inconsistency and tergiversation so freely lavished upon it. *The Times* is the printed breath of public opinion. It throws out a feeler, perhaps, though not quite at first, accompanied by some decided expression of opinion, and carefully watches the effect upon the public mind. Should that effect be different to what was expected, *The Times* knows how to veer round with the *popularis aura*. This is not always, however, done so skilfully but that the act is apparent. It is not the most dignified course that a journal which aspires to be—and which is—the leading journal of Europe ought to pursue; but *The Times* knows human nature, and knows, too, that were it to adopt any other course, it would fall from its high estate, and become a mere party organ. Moreover, *The Times* possesses an enormous prestige—deservedly won, as this article has endeavored to show—and that, in a conservative country like England, is considerably more than half the battle.

In 1842 appeared the first pictorial newspaper, *The Illustrated London News*. It was started by Herbert Ingram, who began life as a provincial newsboy, and died, in the vigor of his age, member of Parliament for his native town. It was a success from the first, so great that numerous competitors sprang up and endeavored to undersell it. But these were all vastly inferior, and one by one withered away, the most persistent of them at last passing into the hands of *The Illustrated London News*, which now enjoys a larger circulation than any other weekly newspaper, amounting to about six millions a year!

There was a satirical paper at this time, called *The Age*, which, being of a strongly libellous character, was continually feeling the weight of the law. It did not improve in character as it grew older, and its editor, Tommy Holt, was proved upon a trial to have received bribes to suppress a slander that he had threatened should appear in his paper. This same Tommy Holt was very successful in inventing 'sensation' headings for his columns, and by no means either delicate or scrupulous in so doing. There was another rascally paper of the same description, called *The Satirist*, which was at last finally crushed by the Duke of Brunswick, the result of several actions for libel. Among other new literary oddities at this time may be mentioned *The Fonetic Nūz*, the organ of those enthusiastic reformers who were endeavoring to accomplish a revolution in our orthography. It lasted, however, but a very short time.

The year 1850 saw the initiation of the final campaign

directed against the only remaining burdens of the press. Mr. Ewart and Mr. Milner Gibson brought forward a motion for the repeal of the advertisement duty, but were defeated by two hundred and eight votes to thirty-nine. But they were not cast down by their want of success, but manfully returned to the charge. In 1851, they procured the appointment of a committee to inquire into the question, and in 1852, gathering strength, like William of Orange, from each successive defeat, they brought forward a triple set of resolutions, one for the abolition of the advertisement duty, another levelled at the stamp, and the third for the repeal of the paper duties. They carried the first, but lost the others. In 1854, Mr. Gibson made a fresh motion concerning the laws affecting the press, and received a promise that the subject should receive the early attention of the House; and in 1855, Sir G.C. Lewis, then chancellor of the exchequer, who had hitherto opposed the repeal of the duty, brought in a bill for its abolition. After a struggle in both Houses the measure passed, and received the royal assent on the 15th of June.

In following up this final struggle, we have passed over one important period, the railway mania in 1845, which gave birth to no less than twenty-nine newspapers, entirely occupied with railway intelligence, in London, besides many others in the provinces. Only two of these have survived, for the other two railway newspapers which still exist were established before that memorable madness fell upon the nation. Of these, Herapath's *Journal* is the oldest and best, and is the oracle of the Stock

Exchange on railway matters. There are some slight symptoms of the madness returning in the present year, as far at least as the metropolis is concerned, and one new railway journal has just been started in consequence. There are many amusing anecdotes told of newspapers at this epoch, of which we will quote one. One of these railway organs had published and paid for, from time to time, lengthy and elaborate reports of the meetings of a certain company, supplied by one of the staff of reporters. At length the editor told the reporter that he thought it was high time for the company to give the paper an advertisement, after all the favorable notices that bad been given to the undertaking in question. The reporter acquiesced, and promised to get the order for an advertisement, but putting it off from time to time, the editor was induced to make inquiries for himself; whereupon he had the extreme satisfaction of learning that no such company had ever existed, and that the elaborate reports of meetings, speeches, etc., had been entirely fabricated by his ingenious employé! An endeavor was made last year to resuscitate one of these defunct daily journals, *The Iron Times*, and Tommy Holt was the editor. It lingered for some weeks, and then smashed utterly. The editor called the contributors together, and told them that there was nothing to pay them with—nothing in fact remained but the office furniture. 'Take that, my boys,' said he, 'and divide it among you.' This was accordingly done, and one man marched off with a table, another with a chair, a third with a desk, a fourth with an inkstand, and so on!

When the stamp duty was abolished as a tax, it remained optional with the publishers to have any number of their issue stamped they pleased for transmission through the poet. The number of stamps thus issued in the first six months after the repeal was 21,646,688, whereas the number in the corresponding period of 1854, when the tax still existed, was 55,732,499. The number of stamps issued in the year 1854 to the principal newspapers was as follows: *Times*, 15,975,739; *Morning Advertiser*, 2,392,780; *Daily News*, 1,485,099; *Morning Herald*, 1,158,000; *Morning Chronicle*, 873,500; *The Globe*, 850,000; and *The Morning Post*, 832,500. Of the weeklies, *The Illustrated London News* was then the second, 5,627,866; *The News of the World*, a Liberal, unillustrated journal, started in 1843, standing first, with 5,673,525 (the price of this paper is now reduced to twopence, and it is an admirably conducted journal); Lloyd's *Weekly Newspaper*, 5,572,897; *The Weekly Times*, price one penny, 3,902,169; Reynolds's *Weekly Newspaper*, also a penny journal, which is best described by the epithet 'rabid,' 2,496,256; *The Weekly Dispatch*, price fivepence, an advanced Liberal journal, which is emphatically the workingman's newspaper, and originally started in 1801, 1,982,933; Bell's *Life in London*, 1,161,000. Of the provincial newspapers, *The Manchester Guardian* heads the list with 1,066,575, followed by *The Liverpool Mercury*, with 912,000, and *The Leeds Mercury*, with 735,000. Foremost among the Scotch newspapers stands *The North British Advertiser*, with

808,002; and the Irish paper with the largest circulation was *The Telegraph*, with 959,000. Of the London literary papers the chief was *The Examiner*, with 248,560. With one or two exceptions, the circulation of these journals may be considered to have increased enormously. There are now published in Great Britain 1,350 different newspapers, of which 240 are London papers, 20 being dailies, 776 English provincial papers, 143 Irish, 140 Scotch, 37 Welsh, and 14 are published in the British Isles. Many of these enjoy but a limited circulation, as naturally follows from the narrow limit they assign to themselves. Thus several trades have their special organs, as for instance, the grocers, the bakers, and even the hairdressers among others.

Before concluding this article it will be well to notice a few of the leading journals which have not been mentioned. *The Daily Telegraph* was originally started at twopence, in 1855, by Colonel Sleigh, but he, getting behindhand with his printers to the amount of £1,000, sold them the paper for another £1,000, and in their hands it has since remained. The price was reduced to a penny, and, under the new management, its circulation rapidly increased. *The Standard* dealt a heavy blow at it in 1858, by coming out suddenly one morning, without any previous warning, as a double sheet. This first number was given away in the streets, in vast quantities, thrown into omnibuses and cabs, pitched into shops and public houses, and so on. The sale of *The Telegraph* so decreased that it was found necessary to enlarge it to the same size as *The Standard*, when its circulation rose

again immediately. It has now the largest circulation in the world, more than 100,000 daily, a much larger London circulation than *The Times*, though a smaller provincial and foreign sale; and its clear profits are variously stated by persons who profess to be well informed, at different sums, the least of which is £20,000 a year. The chief causes of its success are its independent and uncompromising tone, the great pains it takes to gain early intelligence—it has frequently anticipated *The Times* itself in foreign news—and the vigorous and able social articles of Mr. George Augustus Sala. *The Daily News* was started as a Liberal and Reform journal in 1846. An enormous sum of money was sunk in establishing it, for it was not at first successful. Charles Dickens was the first editor, but politics were not much in the line of the genial and unrivalled novelist, and he was soon succeeded by John Forster and Charles Wentworth Dilke, whose connection with the South Kensington Museum and the great Exhibition has made him a knight, a C. B., and a very important personage. *The Daily News* is now one of the ablest and most successful of London journals, and has had and still enjoys the assistance of the best writers of the day in every department. The line which this journal has always maintained toward America will forever earn it the admiration and gratitude of the United States. Another firm friend of the great republic is *The Morning Star*, the organ of Mr. Bright and the Manchester school, started in 1856. In addition to its political claims, it has a great hold upon the public as a family newspaper, by the careful manner

in which everything objectionable is excluded from its columns. Its twin sister, born at the same time, is called *The Evening Star*. *Bell's Life in London*, a weekly journal, was originally brought out in 1820, and, although it has more than one successful rival to contend against, it still maintains its preëminence as the first English sporting paper. It is very carefully edited, each department being placed under a separate editor, and is the great oracle in all matters relating to sports and games. The history of one of the ablest contributors to this journal, who wrote some most charming articles on fly-fishing and other kindred topics, under the signature of 'Ephemera'—though he was said never to have thrown a fly in his life—is a very sad one. His name was Fitzgerald, a man of good family and connections, married to a lady with £1,200 a year, and living in a good house at the West End. But the alcoholic demon had got hold of him. He would disappear for days together, and then suddenly present himself at the office of the paper with nothing on but a shirt and trousers. He would then sit down and write an article, receive his pay, go away and purchase decent clothes, return home, and live quietly perhaps for a month, when he would—to use a prison phrase—break out again as before. He was last seen, in the streets of London, in a state of complete intoxication, being carried upon a stretcher by two policemen to the police cell, where he died the same night.

At the head of the Sunday papers stands *The Observer*, founded in 1792. Like *The Globe*, it is extremely well informed

upon all political matters, for very good reasons. It spares no expense in obtaining early news, and is an especial favorite with the clubs. *The Era* is the great organ of the theatrical world, but joins to that *specialité* the general attributes of an ordinary weekly journal. It was established in 1837. *The Field*, which calls itself the country gentleman's newspaper, is all that it professes to be, and a most admirable publication, treating of games, sports, natural history, and rural matters generally. It was started by Mr. Benjamin Webster, the accomplished actor manager, in 1853. But to particularize the principal papers, even in a short separate notice of a few lines, would far transgress the limits at our disposal. All the professions are well supplied with journals devoted to their interests, and it is impossible here to dwell upon them or those which represent literature and the fine arts. With regard to religious papers, their name is legion, and they would require a separate article to be fairly and honestly considered. *Punch*, too, and his rivals, dead and living, are in the same category, and must, however reluctantly, be passed over. Two curiosities, however, of the press must be mentioned. *Public Opinion* was started about two years and a half ago. It consisted of weekly extracts from the leading articles of English and foreign journals, and scraps of news, and other odds and ends. It has succeeded mainly from its cost of production being so slight, owing to its paste-and-scissors character, and also because it freely opens its columns to correspondents *de rebus omnibus*, who are willing to buy any number of copies for the pleasure

of seeing themselves in print. *The Literary Times*, in addition to reviews of books, professed to criticize the leading articles in the various papers, but, after an existence of some six months or so, one Saturday morning *The Literary Times* was *non est inventus*.

In concluding this series of articles, which has run to a much greater length than he originally intended, the writer is conscious of many shortcomings and omissions, which he trusts will be pardoned and overlooked when his principal object is borne in mind. That object has been to give a general outline of the history of the press, and especially of its struggles against 'the powers which be;' and, though tempted now and again—he fears too often for the patience of his readers—to wander away into particularities, he has always endeavored to keep that object in view. Above all, he hopes he has at least been successful in showing the truth of that sentiment which was first publicly expressed as a toast at a Whig dinner, at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in 1795: 'The liberty of the press—it is like the air we breathe—if we have it not, we die!'

OUR MARTYRS

Lightly the river runs between
Hanging cliffs and meadows green.

Blackly the prison, looking down,
Frowns at its shadow's answering frown.

Shut from life in his life's fresh morn,
Crouches a soldier, wounded and worn.

Chained and starved in the dungeon grim,
Day and night are alike to him;

Save that the murmurous twilight air
Stings his soul with a deeper despair.

Day by day, as the taunting breeze
Wafts him the breath of orange trees,

He fancies in meadows far away
The level lines of odorous hay;

And sees the scythes of the mowers run
In and out of the steady sun.

Night by night, as the mounting moon
Climbs from his eager gaze too soon,

The gleams that across the gratings fall,
Broken and bright, on the prison wall,

Seem the tangles of Northern rills,
Like threads of silver winding the hills.

When, sinking into the western skies,
The sun aslant on the window lies;

And motes that hovered dusty and dim,
Golden-winged through the glory swim:

He drops his head on his fettered hands,
And thinks of the fruitful Northern lands.

Between his fingers' wasted lines,
Tear after tear into sunlight shines,

As, wandering in a dream, he treads
The ripened honey of clover heads;

Or watches the sea of yellow grain
Break into waves on the windy plain;

Or sees the orchard's grassy gloom
Spotted with globes of rosy bloom.

Through the shimmer of shadowy haze
Redden the hills with their autumn blaze.

The oxen stand in the loaded teams;
The cider bubbles in amber streams;

And child-like laughter and girlish song
Float with the reaper's shout along.

He stirs his hands, and the jealous chain
Wakes him once more to his tyrant pain—

To festered wounds, and to dungeon taint,
And hunger's agony, fierce and faint.

The sunset vision fades and flits,
And alone in his dark'ning cell he sits:

Alone with only the jailers grim,
Hunger and Pain, that clutch at him;

And, tight'ning his fetters, link by link,
Drag him near to a ghastly brink;

Where, in the blackness that yawns beneath,
Stalks the skeleton form of Death.

Starved, and tortured, and worn with strife;

Robbed of the hopes of his fresh, young life;—

Shall one pang of his martyr pain
Cry to a sleepless God in vain?

ÆNONE:
A TALE OF SLAVE LIFE IN ROME

CHAPTER X

But though Ænone's sanguinely conceived plan for Cleotos's happiness had so cruelly failed, it was not in her heart to yield to his passionate, unreflecting demand, and send him away from her, even to a kinder home than he would have found at the house of the captain Polidorus. It would but increase his ill fortune, by enforcing still greater isolation from every fount of human sympathy. Though the affection of the wily Leta had been withdrawn from him, her own secret friendship yet remained, and could be a protection to him as long as he was at her side; and in many ways she could yet extend her care and favor to him, until such time as an outward-bound vessel might be found in which to restore him to his native country.

Whether there was any instinct at the bottom of her heart, telling her that in the possibility of trying events to come his friendship might be equally serviceable to her, and that, even in the mere distant companionship of a slave with his mistress, she might feel a certain protecting influence, she did not stop to ask. Neither did she inquire whether she wished to retain him

for his own benefit alone, and without thought of any happiness or comfort to be derived by her from his presence. Had she been accustomed closely to analyze her feelings, she might have perceived, perhaps, that, in her growing isolation, it was no unpleasant thing to look upon the features and listen to the tones which carried her memory back to her early days of poverty, when, except for a short interval, her life had been at its happiest. But had she known and acknowledged all this, it would not have startled her, for she would have felt that, in her heart, there was not the slightest accompanying shade of disloyalty. Her nature was not one to admit of sudden transfers of allegiance. It was rather one in which a real love would last forever. When the first romantic liking for Cleotos had consumed itself, from the ashes there had sprung no new passion for him, but merely the flowers of earnest, true-hearted friendship. And it was her misfortune, perhaps, that the real love for another which had succeeded would not in turn consume itself, but would continue to flourish green and perennial, though now seemingly fated to bask no longer in the sunshine of kindly words and actions, but only to cower beneath the chill of harsh and wanton neglect.

Cleotos therefore remained—at first passing weary days of bitter, heartbreaking despondency. His lost liberty he had borne without much complaint, for it was merely the fortune of war, and hundreds of his countrymen were sharing the same fate with him. But to lose that love upon which he had believed all the happiness of his life depended, was a blow to which, for a time,

no philosophy could reconcile him—the more particularly as the manner in which that loss had been forced upon him seemed, to his sensitive nature, to be marked by peculiar severity. To have had her torn from him in any ordinary way—to part with her in some quarrel in which either side might be partially right, and thenceforth never to see her again—or to be obliged to yield her up to the superior claims of an open, generous rivalry—any of these things would, in itself, have been sufficient affliction. But it was far worse than all this to be obliged to meet her at every turn, holding out her hand to him in pleasant greeting, and uttering words of welcoming import; and all with an unblushing appearance of friendly interest, as though his relations with her had never been other than those of a fraternal character, and as though, upon being allowed her mere friendship, there could be nothing of which he had a right to complain.

At first, in the agony of his heart, he had no strength to rise above the weight which crushed him, and to obey the counsels of his pride so far as to play before her a part of equally assumed indifference. To her smiling greetings he could return only looks of bitter despair or passionate entreaty—vainly hoping that he might thereby arouse her better nature, and bring her in repentance back to him. And at first sight it seemed not impossible that such a thing might take place; for, in the midst of all her change of conduct and wilful avoidance of allusion to the past, she felt no dislike of him. It was merely her love for him that she had suppressed, and in its place there still remained a

warm regard. If he could have been content with her friendship alone, she would have granted it all, and would have rejoiced, for the sake of olden times, to use her influence with others in aid of his upward progress. Perhaps there were even times when, as she looked upon his misery and thought of the days not so very far back, in which he had been all in all to her, her heart may have been melted into something of its former affection. But if so, it was only for a moment, nor did she ever allow the weakness to be seen. Her path had been taken, and nothing now could make her swerve from it. Before her enraptured fancy gleamed the state and rank belonging to a patrician's wife; and as she wove her toils with all the resources of her cunning, the prize seemed to approach her nearer and nearer. Now having advanced so far, she must not allow a momentary weakness to imperil all. And therefore unwaveringly she daily met her former lover with the open smile of friendly greeting, inviting confidence, mingled with the same indescribable glance, forbidding any renewal of love.

And so days passed by, and Cleotos, arousing from his apathetic despair, felt more strongly that, if the lapse of love into mere friendship is a misfortune, the offer of friendship as a substitute for promised love is a mockery and an insult: his soul rebelled at being made a passive party to such a bargain; and he began himself to play the retaliatory part which a wronged nature naturally suggests to itself. Like Leta, he learned to hold out the limpid hand in careless greeting, or to mutter meaningless

and cold compliments, and, in any communication with her, to assume all the appearances of indifferent acquaintanceship. At first, indeed, it was with an aching heart struggling in his breast, and an agony of wounded spirit tempting him to cast away all such studied pretences, and to throw himself upon her mercy, and meanly beg for even the slightest return of her former affection. But gradually, as he perceived how vain would be such self-abasement, and how its display would rather tend to add contempt to her indifference, his pride came to rescue him from such a course; and he began more and more to tune the temper of his mind to his actions, and to feel something of the same coldness which he outwardly displayed.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.