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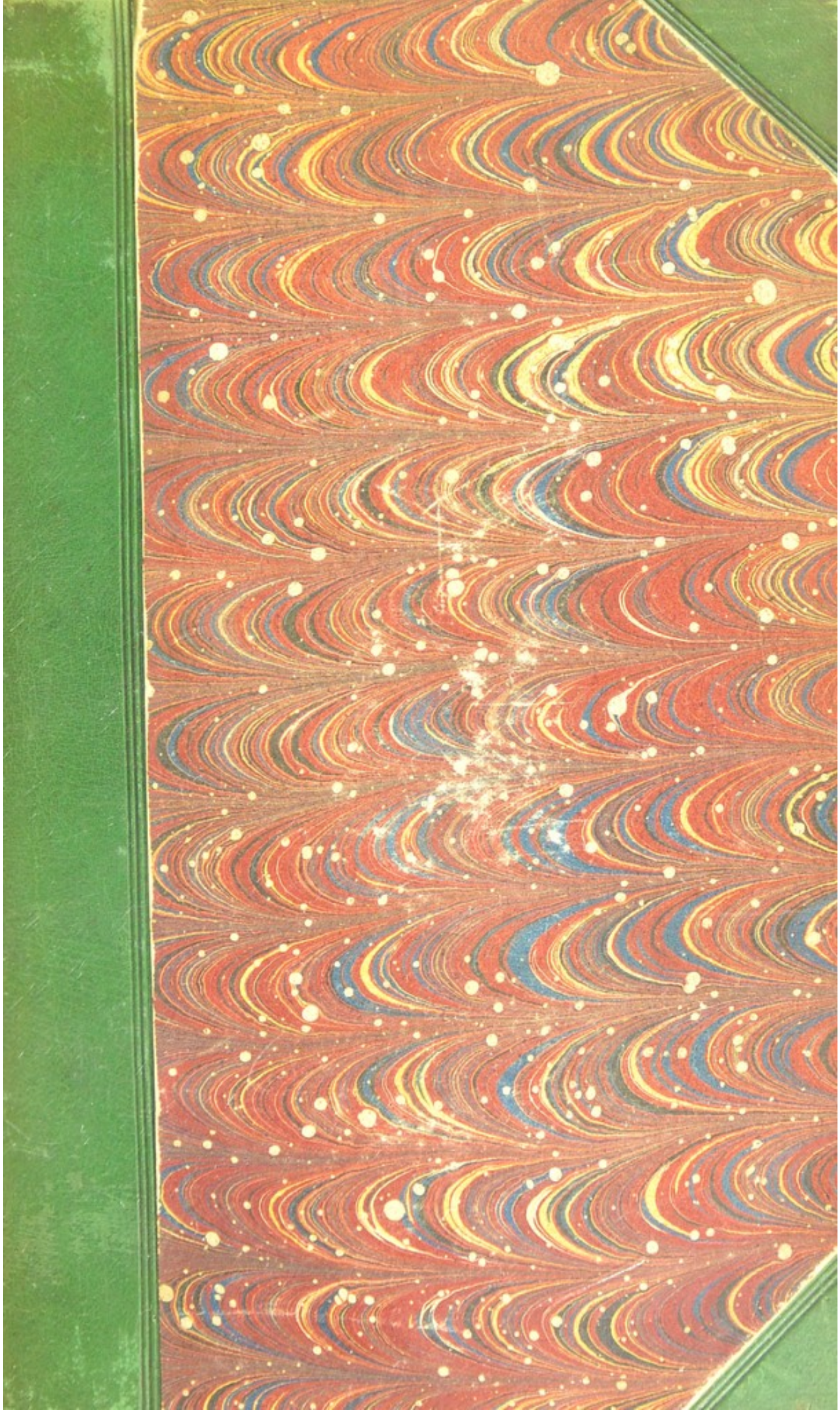

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SKETCHES AND CHARACTERS

OR

The Natural History

OF THE

HUMAN INTELLECTS.

BY

JAMES WILLIAM WHITECROSS.

LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1853.

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A MICHEL PR. DE WISZNIEWSKI

AUTEUR DE

Sketches and Characters, or the Natural History of human intellect.

Plongeant dans un puits de science
Votre plume, avec sapience,
Vous esquissez les traits divers
De notre intelligence humaine,
Et votre livre nous promène
De ses grandeurs à ses travers,
Sous votre loupe diligente,
Nous exhibant tous les revers
De notre médaille changeante.
Là, d'échelon en échelon,
Remontant l'échelle infinie,
L'on va du crétin au génie
De Kant et de Napoléon.
Votre œuvre est un vaste musée,
Où l'attention amusée
Rencontre partout des croquis
Et des portraits bien réussis,
Qui, de votre plume féconde
Fidèles illustrations,
Peignent de l'un et l'autre monde
L'homme et les populations;

Dans votre magique lanterne
Défile au long l'humanité,
Et, sous son rayon jamais terne
Vous l'éclairez de tout côté.
De ce savoir que lui prodigue
Votre esprit docte, en vous lisant,
Jamais lecteur ne se fatigue,
Par vous instruit en s'amusant.
Profond, plaisant, rempli d'images,
Sagace et savant Polonais,
C'est surtout quand je lis vos pages
Sur un point que vous m'étonnez.
Vous que la Vistule a vu naître
Loin de la Tamise et son bord,
Vous écrivez l'anglais en maître
Et semblez à fond le connaître
Aussi bien qu'un recteur d'Oxford!
De Théophraste imitant l'exemple,
Vous apportez, Polonais lettré,
A la science, pour son temple,
Ce savant bloc par vous ouvré!
On dit que ce n'est qu'une assise
Première, un vaste fondement.
Qu'à votre gloire elle suffise!
Ce bloc est presque un monument:
Oui! votre œuvre, attrayant mélange
D'éloquence et de vérité,
Est une lettre de change,
Qu'accepte la postérité.

A. Dabadie.

Nice. Carabacel, juin 1860.

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NATURAL HISTORY

OF

HUMAN INTELLECTS.

CHAPTER I.

The present Essay is composed of gleanings on the field of mental philosophy, and is but a natural history of human intellects.

The obvious disparity in the intellectual powers of men pointed out.

The influence of diet, of the game of draughts and chess and of whist; the influence of daylight, of the weakness or excellence of the senses, or of the want of one of them; the influence of passions, of society, of parliamentary life, of education, and of music, upon our intellectual faculties.

The influence which different deficiencies, as well as excellencies, capacities, and biass of our intellect, are exerting upon our morals, passions, and judgment.

Sources and modifications of mental disparity.

An account of the motives, occasions, and sources of the observations, displaying the diversity and disparity of mental characters.

I. THERE is nothing that astounds and transports us so much, and fills the mind with an ever new and ever rising admiration, as the starry heaven above

and the structure of our intellect within us. If the vast distances and mighty bulk of the heavenly bodies, their infinite number, and the prodigious velocity of their motions, fill the imagination with awe, a close survey of the structure of our intellect excites equal wonder and astonishment. Even at the outset there is something interesting, if not marvellous, in the quantity of different organs of apprehension: we have got five fingers, five senses, and five distinct faculties of the intellect. If the structure of the eye, considered as an optical instrument, with its crystalline lens, its adaptation to the properties of light, and its varieties suited to the different necessities of each animal, never fails to rouse our admiration, nothing startles and amazes us more than the organization of our inward spiritual eye, of our conscience and understanding, of which the former, "the still small voice," warns us of the least deviation from the straight line of moral duties, and though unasked and unlooked for, judges of the goodness or wickedness, not only of our actions, but even of our most secret motives; whereas the latter is fitted out with the wonderful organ of causation, and the faculty of reasoning by induction and analogy.

Beholding for the first time the internal organization of our mind, we cannot help admiring the infinite wisdom of our Creator, who, forming it in a manner so perfectly adapted to its destination, endowing it with such powers, faculties, and propensities, as are necessary to preserve our life, to ascertain all our moral duties, even the highest, to know ourselves and the thousands of worlds rolling and blazing above, has reared up the noblest emblem of his omnipotence.

Looking at the human understanding, we are wound up to a pitch of ecstasy at the spectacle of the ingenious contrivances, which characterize the structure of mind, and of the wonderful fitness of means and aim, exhibiting most striking proofs of design. What things indispensable to our conservation and happiness we are unable to know, we cannot help believing. It is very essential for men to be apt of early ascertaining and arriving at a positive knowledge of their duty, but the human understanding is very slow in its development. Obviating that serious inconvenience, Providence has made moral powers susceptible of a high degree of culture even in the infant mind, long before the powers of intellect are developed for the investigation of truth.

Consciousness arrests the flow of thought, and thus enables the intellect to compare ideas, draw conclusions, and form judgments. The first act of consciousness is the result of voluntary attention; the last three is reasoning. But attention, or the arresting of the flow of thoughts, is a painful and difficult act of our mind; it is, therefore, not left barely to its own exertions, but is roused by curiosity, aided by association, which brings new ideas within its range, nourished by memory, which supplies its stores, and is rendered more easy by practice and habit.

The human intellect is, besides, outfitted with a mathematical organ, whose wonderful and far-reaching powers were gradually developed out of the simple ideas of space and time, and from the times of *Thales* were brought almost to perfection by *Newton*, *Euler*, and *Lagrange*, as we see in "conic sections, the

theory of gravitation, the differential calculus, and the solution of the problem of three bodies." These magnificent and splendid creations of the mathematical organ of the human intellect, giving out the laws which bind the universe in eternal order, though mere creations of pure abstract thought, when applied to the material worlds rolling in infinite space, were found to dovetail exactly, to explain the celestial mechanism, illustrate the most stupendous mysteries, and enable us even to anticipate by ages the discovery of truths the farthest removed above ordinary apprehension—as, for instance, the solar and lunar eclipses, or the re-appearance of comets after the revolution of centuries.

The first discovery of the disparity in the intellectual powers is prompted by the striking inferiority of our domesticated animals, with whom we are familiarly acquainted from our infancy. It never fails to strike even the most superficial observer, upon the most cursory glance, that they possess but a few fragments of soul and tatters of understanding; that, though not wholly devoid of curiosity, they have but a very slight degree of that faculty; that not only their inferiority to men, but even their relative differences, remain stationary. A horse, a cat, a dog, never show any progress, or display any relative superiority over each other, but always remain within the same limits allotted to them by Providence. In general, animals seem to have no organ of causality; they are blindly conducted by instinct,—a substitute for human reason,—and attain in a short time their utmost perfection, beyond which they are never able to advance. Bees and beavers, though ingenious,

build always on the same plan. In their observations and reasonings they appear to be limited to a few simple and local objects. They seem to have no foresight; exceptions in bees, ants, and beavers, though bearing little more than a shadow of forecast, excite our astonishment as something out of the way, something lying beyond the limits of their apprehensive and reasoning faculties; whereas men carry their researches into the most distant regions of the globe, even beyond it, to heavenly bodies; are enabled to ascertain the weight of bodies at the surface of the most distant world; to investigate the laws that govern their motions or mould their forms, and calculate to a second of time the period of their reappearance; they may turn their thoughts backwards into the darkness of primitive ages, to the cradle of the human race, and have succeeded in constructing ancient history out of such scanty relics as decaying monuments, mouldering records, fabulous legends, and the sybilline leaves of tradition; and, what is more, they discovered within the bowels of the earth the hieroglyphics of primeval annals during thousands of years before it was occupied by their own race. Besides, men are capable of casting their eyes forward, to predict the influence of their actions or legislation on posterity; to trace causes and effects to a great length; to extract general principles from particular appearances; to correct their mistakes, improve upon their discoveries, draw profits even from their blunders, and to reason by induction and analogy—two powerful instruments of ascertaining truth, savouring of fiction and improbability—which led *Newton* to predict from the refraction of light the

inflammable quality of the diamond, and the decomposition of water.

The chequered pattern of the intellectual capacities of men, no less striking, though more difficult to ascertain, than the difference of mind between men and animals, did not fail to attract the early attention of men in general, as we are enabled to infer from the terms used for their designation, terms to be found in all languages, ancient and modern, which give an unequivocal evidence that men's minds were not only struck by these psychological phenomena; but even, judging by their great quantity, it appears that men of different degrees of culture were early engaged in ascertaining even the most minute shades and inflections of those differences; that, notwithstanding some assertions to the contrary,* there pre-

* I am perfectly aware that there are some literary men, and of the highest authority, too, denying flatly those differences. *Mr. Edgworth* says, that "many of the great differences of intellect which appear in men, depend more upon the early cultivating the habit of attention, than upon any disparity between the powers of one individual and another." Now, upon reading this, I wonder whether the attention of our author was early cultivated. The sententious *Dr. Johnson* once, in his unguarded mood, asserted that "the supposition of one man having more imagination, another more judgment, *is not true;* it is only one man has more mind than another. He who has vigour may walk to the east as well as the west, if he happens to turn his head that way." This is only a sophism, and not a very ingenious one, in a dogmatical cloak; it would almost look like impertinent trifling with the common sense of my readers to endeavour to make plain what is already so palpable. Facts stare us too plainly in the face; they are like diamonds, not only cut glass, but send forth the light of the flame; they are stubborn things, and cannot be reasoned away at so cheap a rate, even by a *Johnson.* However, we find in one of his letters to *Mrs. Thrale,* a more correct, though quite a contrary opinion.

vailed such a general opinion and conviction of the existence of a native disparity in the capacities of men, as not to require any farther arguments, and as bearing on its face the evidence of facts, which may easily be verified by experience.

We see, moreover, that men have been led to reflect upon some external signs, upon several striking coincidences, supposed to indicate the natural bent, strength, and bias of the human intellect, as well as of certain qualities of the mind—viz., certain features or lineaments of the face, or some dozen of bumps on the skull, were believed of being able to furnish a tangible clue for forming a just estimate, *à priori*, of the intellectual and moral abilities and propensities of every individual. *Lavater*, *Dr. Gall*, and *Dr. Spurzheim* were seriously engaged in the search of those signs upon the human face and skull, and having given to certain qualities of the mind a local habitation and sometimes a new name, reduced too rashly their observations into a system, and under the names of *Physiognomy* and *Phrenology* brought them forward as complete and exact sciences. But, eager to elicit the coincidence and correlation of mental powers with certain external and visible signs, they neglected to make a particular study of the disparity in the abilities and of the different casts of human intellects, and thus founded their systems upon obvious observations, which, made at random, were never examined, compared, and completed, quite against the rules of inductive method sketched out by *Lord Bacon*. This appears to be one among many other reasons that, though the literature of *Phrenology* amounts in bulk to a respectable library, the truth of the phrenological theory is far from being

established, though it has not been proved to be false; in fact, *physiognomy* is now become an agreeable pastime of those who delight in prints; whereas *phrenology* maintains its ground only with those who have a large capacity of belief, or obstinacy in maintaining their notions.

II. The ancient Egyptians appear to have been aware of the great influence of the diet upon the soundness, readiness, and the full development of our intellectual faculties, as we may infer from the dietetical rules framed for their priests, who exclusively cultivated all sciences. *Franklin*, from his personal experience, recommends abstemiousness in eating, and the exclusive use of clear water, as conducive to clearness of thought. The stablemen and drivers of Mr. Whitbread's brewery, observes the "American in England," are as colossal as their horses; and the appearance of all the people about this establishment goes to prove that beer-drinking is not, after all, such a bad thing in its physical effects. Its tendency, however, did not seem to be to quicken the intellect, for most of them had a dull, drowsy, and immovable look. It was impossible to detect any intellectuality in their countenances or speculation in their eyes.

Mr. Edgar A. Poe observes, that "the game of chess, in its effects upon the mental character, is greatly misunderstood, and that the higher powers of the reflective intellect are more decidedly and more usefully tasked by the unostentatious game of draughts than by all the elaborate frivolity of chess. Whist has long been noted for its influence upon what is termed the calculating power; and men of the highest order of intellect have been known to take an appa-

rently unaccountable delight in it, while eschewing chess as frivolous. Beyond doubt there is nothing of a similar nature so greatly tasking the faculty of analysis. The best chess-player in Christendom may be little more than the best player of chess; but proficiency in whist implies capacity for success in all those more important undertakings where mind struggles with mind. The sources whence legitimate advantage may be derived, are not only manifold but multiform, and frequently among recesses of thought altogether inaccessible to the ordinary understanding. To observe attentively is to remember distinctly, and so far the concentrative chess-player will do very well at whist, while the rules of *Hoyle* are generally comprehensible; but it is a matter beyond the limits of the rule, that the skill of the analyst is evinced as he is making in silence a host of observations and inferences."

We learn from the statistics of France, that there is an odd analogy between the amount of daylight enjoyed by the people and their amount of intellectual illumination—the best lodged departments being also the best instructed.

The weakness or excellence of our senses, or a want of one of them, has also a striking influence upon our mind and moral character; for in that mysterious union of body and soul everything is strictly connected, and has a close relation to each other. "The blindness," says *Guillé*, Director of the Blind Hospital in Paris, "not only deprives the blind of ideas which are generated by sight, but is modifying a great many others. The blind having no notion of colour and shades, have many distorted ideas; have no notion of decency and shame, the loveliest qualities of youth; are but rarely kind-

hearted; accustomed to caution, they are very apt to confound their benefactor with their enemy."

It has been observed that our moral propensities, affections, and passions, are strongly influencing our understanding, giving it a certain bias or leading into error. This circumstance has even attracted the attention of the profound French philosopher, *Pascal*. It has been, for instance, observed, that a vain man can never be a good dramatist; that the habit of flattery inevitably introduces a false taste into poetical compositions; that the love of power, like that of money, renders even the dullest intelligent; that a generous, open, manly nature bestows upon the faculties of men's understanding a reach of enlargement to which meaner natures are ever strangers. *Burke*, in one of his speeches, observes, that "prudence is a quality incompatible with vice, and can never be effectively enlisted in its cause." *Sheridan*, expatiating upon it (trial of *Warren Hastings*), remarks, that it is only a single domineering passion that is capable of exerting a supremacy over our understanding, and using its faculties as pliant instruments; whereas many passions let loose together tend to blunt and unsettle prudence. Every-day experience teaches us that we find it difficult to think well of those by whom we are depressed or thwarted, and that we are ready to admit every excuse for the vices of those who are useful or agreeable to us; that the habits of thinking having origin in strong feelings, are far more difficult to eradicate than any mere error of judgment, which so naturally falls before the exertions of the reasoning power; that passions deprive men of the power of calculating chances; that prejudice is destructive of sound judgment, and

perverts all the operations of the intellectual faculties; that the will has a great influence upon our belief, though it does not create it; that great misfortunes disturb the understanding as much as great success; that adoration of "things that be" may blind even a vigorous intellect. Everybody might have had occasion to remark, that men, otherwise very clever and shrewd, are often blundering in their judgments and notions concerning their neighbours. The very same faults and feelings which they never fail to deprecate in others, which are in their eyes crimes of a deep dye, in them prove to be virtues; their long-winded loquacity they call oratory; their avarice is but economy; sticking to the pelf, in them, is forecast; what they are reckoning for a simple duty, when done by others, with them is self-immolation. *Lord Bolingbroke* used to call those who had written against his party, *scandalous libellers*, whereas writers for his party went with him by the name of *literary supporters*. But such influence of the passions upon our judgment is the department of dramatic poets.

The influence of society upon our intellectual powers is also a circumstance not much attended to. We know from experience that conversation enriches the understanding, and that solitude is the school of genius. "The study of books," says *Dr. Thomas Fuller*, "is a languishing and feeble motion, that heats not; whereas conference teaches and exercises at once. If I confer with an understanding man and a rude jester, he presses hard upon me on both sides; his imagination raises up mine to more than ordinary pitch. Jealousy, glory, and contention stimulate and raise me up to something above myself; and a con-

sent of judgment is a quality totally offensive in conference. But as our minds fortify themselves by the communication of vigorous and regular understandings, it is not to be expressed how much they lose and degenerate by the continual commerce and frequentation we have with those that are mean and low. There is no contagion that spreads like that; I know sufficiently by experience what it is worth a yard."

The tendency of parliamentary life is to develope and encourage ready wit at the expense of learning, deep thought, and close reasoning. The most vigorous minds, when taking a serious part in parliamentary debates, are often inveigled to bring forth arguments that no man of sense would publish in writing—arguments which may pass unrefuted when set off with pointed language and fluent delivery. They have, it is true, frequent occasions for developing their talent for debate; but the habit of loose reasoning is the more prejudicial, as the ablest of them usually takes a seat in parliament at a very early age, before the mind has expanded to full maturity; and it is not always that they retain unimpaired those faculties which are required for close reasoning or enlarged speculation.

It is a true saying of *Lord Bacon*, that "reading makes a full man, talking a ready man, and writing an exact man." There is no need of expatiating in that place upon the influence of training, education, and instruction on our intellectual powers; we only cannot help remarking, that the same course of study which all but fixed *Bunyan*, the author of "Pilgrim's Progress," in religious despair, hurried into profligacy and atheism the less favourably constituted mind of

Lawrence Claxton, whose autobiography contains the avowal of his vicious life. It has been ascertained in France, that the amount of legal crime in that country does appear to keep pace with the amount of primary instruction; that educated populations exhibit a larger amount of crime than ignorant ones. "My own reason," says *M. D'Angeville*, author of a very interesting book, 'Moral and Intellectual Statistics of France,' "had long combated the evidence of facts on this subject, before my investigation forced me to adopt this conclusion." Whereas *Walter Scott* says, that the introduction of schools has tamed down the native ferocity of Scotchmen.

The effect of music upon the faculty of invention is likewise a fact as yet very little noticed, and hardly ever examined. "Almost all my tragedies," says *Alfieri*, "were sketched in my mind, either in the act of hearing music, or a few hours after." *Milton* listened to his organ for his solemn inspirations. *Lord Bacon* had music often played in the room adjoining his study. *Curran's* favourite mode of meditation was with his violin in his hand.

III. But there is another range of observations and researches, which seem to have been wholly overseen, or rather neglected: it is, the influence which different deficiencies, excellencies, capacities, and biass of our intellect, are exerting upon our morals and passions. It is well known that the disturbed equilibrium of mental faculties works perniciously upon the moral part of human nature. It is easy to aver that, for instance, men of weak memory are generally suspicious; that persons of limited capacity have generally a quick eye to their own interest; an open hand

and a yielding heart are the invariable concomitants of genius, as much as a suspicious temper and niggardly disposition of mediocrity. A too vivid imagination is disqualifying the mind for the cold contact of reality. Poetical temperament appears to have a natural tendency to superstition. Men of higher order of genius rarely show themselves fitted for the calm affections and comforts of domestic life. Dogmatical turn of mind is usually connected with extreme vanity. The Persian poet, *Sâdee*, says, that "a wise man does not always know when to begin; but a fool never knows when to stop." Practical men, while improving their understanding, become more and more wavering and hesitating, and in the prosecution of their schemes exhibit, an unprecedented and unusual circumstance with them, a want of determination and firm resolution. *Thucydides* remarks (ii. 40), that "ignorance brings daring, while calculation brings fear." This interesting fact, disclosing in a striking manner the great influence of the qualities and power of the intellect upon our mind, has been observed in surgeons and military officers. In middle ages, a Spanish monk had acquired a great reputation by his happy operations of the stone. He had been advised, when in France, to study anatomy, of which he appears to have been utterly ignorant; but having made some progress in it, he got dismayed at his former audacity, displayed but very indifferent skill as an operator, and at last abandoned his craft. The French Marshal, *Saint-Cyr*, observes, that military officers lose in determination what they might have gained, by improving their minds. It has been remarked in France, where such an experience is possible, that men of science turn courtiers more readily than men of letters, poets, and historians, who seem

to be more jealous of their independence. On the other hand, we know that a serious application to science or the liberal arts softens and humanizes the temper, and cherishes those high emotions in which true virtue consists;* that, for instance, treachery is the usual concomitant of barbarism and ignorance; that men of profound mind are inclined to think lightly of the resources of human reason; whereas the pert, superficial thinker, is generally strongest in every kind of unbelief; that a man of genius, if not pursuing ambitious schemes, is either a humorist, or a visionary, or a hypochondriac.

But deficiencies as well as excellencies of our intellect have also a visible influence upon our judgment. A fool, for instance, condemns others for his own misfortunes; a half-witted accuses only himself; but the wise man neither complains of himself nor others. Prompt susceptibility of new impressions renders the judgment variable and shifting. Poets are strangely tempted to let imagination do memory's work.

There are, then, two facts in the philosophy of the human mind, which were not duly examined: the great varieties in the qualities and inflections of the human intellect, and its influence upon the human passions and morals.

IV. ——————Different minds
Incline to different objects : one pursues
The vast alone, the wonderful, the wild;
Another sighs for harmony and grace
And gentlest beauty. AKENSIDE.

There is in the powers and capacities of which the human intellect is made up, as much, if not more,

* ——— ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec sinil esse feros.

variety, shades, infinite and minute gradations, as in the propensities, leanings, and passions of our mind, or in the countenance and lineaments of our face. Every man has his peculiar turn of mind, his peculiar compass or reach of capacity, his peculiar propensities and biass, qualities and deficiencies of the faculties, and peculiar habits of thought. It would be easier to find two leaves of the same size and form, as two intellects of the same compass and cast. But some deficiencies being more striking, are soon taken notice of even by a common observer; as, for instance, a leaky memory, a distracted mind: while others, lying deeper in the nature of our intellect, in order to be ascertained, require some preliminary notions of the texture of the human understanding.

The human understanding is a compound of different faculties, native predispositions, and powers; as consciousness, intuition, perception, attention, association, fancy, imagination, judgment, and reason; their different compass, capacity, propensities, and deficiencies, are the intermittent fountain of diversity in the shades of the human intellect. Besides, out of these different relations, qualities, and deficiencies, grow mental varieties of a new order. *Dryden*, for instance, had an obliquity of understanding, which led him to the discovery of error only; his intellectual retina appears to have been too small to receive the whole compass and sketch of men; he was only capable of making rough drafts of a profile; whereas *Shakespeare* was able to portray a whole character—the good as well as the ill—with all shades of intellect, all inflections, turns, and touches of passion. There are men endowed with powers of apprehension so uncommonly quick, as almost to resemble intuition;

whereas others discover the cause of the result not before the game is played, and carefully lock the door when the steed is stolen: there are persons more fertile in objections than expedients. We see, often, men of quick apprehension, but forgetful; whereas others are late to perceive, but are endued with a retentive memory. One person excels in judgment, another in wit. There are men of wonderful memory, but restless, given to change in the objects of their inquiry; whereas others are capable of perseverance and pertinacity in most abstrusive researches. There are men who have sense in matters of theory, and no judgment in matters of practice; whilst others, having nothing above common sense, display an unmatchable soundness of judgment. There are men that always place a microscope before their eyes, whilst others prefer looking through a magic lantern. There are men capable of elevating their mind to higher ranges of thought; others like only to engage in particulars and matters of fact. We sometimes see orators best in reply, whose opening speeches are always unsuccessful. There are men who cling with fondness to whatever is ancient, and never consent to any, though obviously beneficial, change, without many misgivings and forebodings; whilst others, always hasting forward, sanguine in hope, bold in speculation, are quick to discern the imperfection of whatever exists, think lightly of the risks and inconveniences which attend every innovation, and are disposed to pass off any change for improvement. There are Tories and Whigs in mental bias, as well as in politics. There are men skilful in the art of reading characters and practising on the weaknesses of individuals; whereas others have the sagacity to discern the feeling of

masses, and the slightest shadow of coming events and revolutions. Some men are not satisfied till they have reduced the whole stock of their knowledge to certain general principles, till they have built up a system; whilst others never fail to throw the rich colours of their imagination, and the hue of their mind, upon all that they have seen or thought of, and are not satisfied till they have transfigured it, embodied in a picture, and sketched out a likeness true to nature, but a likeness pitched to the height of an idea. There are some men whose faculties appear to leave them on taking up a pen, others who become half inspired. There are privileged men who do not fail of learning much from the experience of others; whereas the most part are hardly capable of profiting by their own.

There are some mental propensities common to all men, though not to the same degree, which are doing the same service to our understanding as the five fingers to the hand: perceptions acquired by the instrumentality of senses and apprehension, are by every one referred instinctively to a certain *place* and a certain *time*. Everybody on perceiving an effect, would like to know its cause. The same kind of native mental propensity leads us towards the formation and construction of general ideas, more or less numerous and comprehensive, which serve to reduce our observations, notions, and desultory knowledge, into a system, or perhaps may be laid down as a foundation of our reasoning. Besides, there are certain faculties and modes of thinking and of feeling, that lead us irresistibly to seek some communication with another world. But these general and innate propensities of the human understanding are of unequal intensity,

and, what is more to the point, are unfitted to be developed and improved to the same level in every individual, even by the most careful and philosophical training; as the shrub can never become a tree. Of a hundred persons that are crossing a river, hardly one happens to think of tracing it up to its rise and down to its mouth. And this is the second source of diversity in the quality and compass of human intellect.

But there is besides a higher range of natural propensities of intellect, which is accounting for the infinite gradations in the mental capacities of men. There are, for instance, minds of so unfortunate a contexture, as to be wholly insensible to the beauty of truth, and unable of discerning it by any of its most striking signs; whilst others are endowed with a sharpsightedness capable of catching up its slightest suggestions and foreshadowings, and picking it among the densest crowd of fallacies, misstatements, and sophistry. Some men have a better judgment, others a more lively and prolific fancy. There are men of philosophical temperament, whose mind delights only in speculative and scientific truth; whereas others exhibit a prevailing poetical temper, whose passion is ideal beauty. There are privileged men—as was, for instance, *Sir Walter Raleigh*—who, endowed with both reflective and active powers, are equally qualified to distinguish themselves in studious solitude and on the busy theatre of affairs. One person is constantly in search of analogies, another prefers to ascertain nothing but differences. Subtle minds attach much importance to slight distinctions; whereas high and discursive intellects lay a great stress on slight resemblances. Some men are generalizing, cautiously and slowly;

others are prone to proceed rashly, without being able to take into consideration a sufficient number of observations duly examined. We may see some persons sticking fast to their opinions; whilst others alter their mind as the wind is shifting from one point to another, as if they lacked the capacity of strong convictions. There are men thinking for themselves; whereas others do it by proxy, or are only beating the trodden paths. You often see men of extensive learning, superior capacity, and great experience, exhibiting a great shyness in asserting; whereas others, wise in their own conceit, confounding their compass of intellect with the limits of the human understanding, stick with pertinacity to their preconceptions, and boldly condemn the opinion of others, the possibility of their own being erroneous never entering their narrow mind. One is going sure grounds; another is always uncertain and wavering. One shows a childish credulity; another is always sifting, discussing, and arguing. There are quick-sighted men who are far from being foresighted.

There are intellects endowed with destructive powers ; they know how to undermine the strongest evidence, find ways and means of shaking the strongest confidence ; nothing daunted by any consideration of the most serious kind, they will patiently knock at every link of arguments joining great truths together, will probe every wall, try the strength of the ceiling, scrutinize and scan the foundation, till they have hit upon the weak side of the question at issue, and are not satisfied till they see themselves surrounded by ruins of what was a strong building of conviction; whereas others possess that comprehensiveness of

mind and constructive power, which enables men to demolish an obsolete and vexatious system, but at the same time to raise a durable and useful fabric in its place. There are men who in the most obscure and abstruse investigations, are capable of availing themselves of a mere faint glimmering, and descry a path through a tangled wilderness—a path leading towards the object of their researches, and who put light where there was nothing but darkness; whereas others contrive to confuse and complicate the most trite and obvious notions or self-evident truths, or who in their mistaken love of depth take for profound whatever is obscure, preferring a muddy stream, though shallow, to a clear one, however deep. There are metaphysicians more potent to confute error than to establish truth. There are men who like to embrace the heterodox side of every question; others display a disposition to keep by the received though erroneous theories. *Dr. Priestley*, inveighing with unremitting zeal against the established religion, pertinaciously defended the chemical doctrine of phlogiston. *Jeremy Bentham*, though a great humorist, appears to have been wanting in the sense of the ridiculous. There are privileged persons, as *Theramenes* in ancient, and *Talleyrand* in modern times, having a finer perception of all the particularities of character, and all the indications of coming change—persons capable of seeing the shadow of coming events; whereas to others, all those signs and foreshadowings are invisible or unintelligible. There are men given to contemplation, whose calm intellect best qualifies them to investigate speculative truth, while others have the penetrating judgment and speculative powers robust enough to seize large fragments of truth, and necessary mental capacities

adapted to propagate and make it triumph, not only over the understandings of men, but over their affections and passions; the first are capable of stating truth with philosophical precision, the latter are masters of that rough moral computation, which contents itself for practical purpose with approximate accuracy. There are certain castes of mind, generally of second-rate capacity, that always succeed in the world —others that never thrive. There are men wiser for others than for themselves. A man of fantastical, fanciful mind, is every day creating a new world for himself, never knows how to avail himself of the present circumstance till it has passed away; a stranger in the actual world, he is always living in times gone by, and always longing for time to come.

Besides, different pursuits, employments, and crafts, give to mental powers particular habits and bias; a man that is only putting on the head of a pin is not so intelligent as a mountaineer, whose intellect is sharpened by a great variety of employment. We read in *Heron's* "Scotland," that pedlers as they wander each alone, through thinly-inhabited districts, form habits of reflection and contemplation. Upon the great faculties and qualities which a life at sea quickens, it also impresses a form and colour of its own. A literary man has different habits of thought, from a practical and active one. Advocates have generally a great proficiency in argument and invective, are very skilful in unravelling the tangled tissue of a knotted statement, are masters of evasions and subtilties of inferior capacities, and have a shrewd insight into an antagonist's weak point. In the conversion of a great advocate into a great judge, there is much to overcome and alter, as well as to acquire.

Tacitus says, that a Roman soldier rarely possessed subtlety of intellect, for the military authority acting by compulsion does not exercise the understanding.*

Education, training, culture of mind, arts and sciences, cultivating the mind to a different development, calling forth different faculties or the same faculty in different ways and degrees, forming different habits of thought and bias of intellect, which are getting with time the intensive force of nature, have a modifying influence upon our understanding, especially upon certain intellects, which are easily moulded into every shape, like wax, and partly account for its minute gradations in power, extent, and deficiencies; as, for instance, a home-keeping youth has ever homely wit. We know by experience, that the visual force of the understanding is perverted by being fixed on one object exclusively. Philosophers, metaphysicians, antiquaries, and critics, strengthening by dint of continual exercise certain faculties at the expense of others, which are suffered to lie unemployed, render them weak, dull, and unwieldy. Persons seriously and constantly engaged in historical researches have a respect only for what is authentic. Scholastic philosophy, neglecting to discuss its principles, putting a blind confidence in the authority of others, only exerted itself with great energy to prove its statements, and often tortured into a proof what was to be proved; hence it came that the metaphysicians of the middle ages, though very acute dialecticians, were bad philosophers. The votaries of mental philosophy exhibit a certain vigour and an acuteness

* Credunt plerique militaribus ingeniis subtilitatem deesse; quia castrensis jurisdictio secura et obtusior, ac plura manu agens, calliditatem feri non exerceat (" Vita Agricol.")

of faculty peculiar to them; they appear to be endowed with the power of nice discrimination—are capable of arresting and examining the most subtle and evanescent ideas, and of striking rapidly and boldly into the faintest track of analogy, in order to see where it leads, and what it is likely to produce; they appear to be emancipated, to a certain degree, from the tyranny of words, and seem to be endowed with undaunted intrepidity to push opinions up to the first causes. Mathematical sciences exercising exclusively the faculty of reasoning or deduction, give no employment to, and thus disqualify, the other powers of understanding concerned in the investigation of truth; hence it comes that mathematicians, losing the capacity of real observation and of critically appreciating comparative degrees of probability, are often found unfit for the most important employment of the human mind, think little of investigations whose practical use is not at hand, have a dislike to truths that cannot be proved with such evidence as their own set of propositions, and are not satisfied till they have clothed the determinate quantities of arithmetic in the universal symbols of algebra. They are apt to be stubborn in their opinions, and are very prone either to credulity or scepticism; for it has been observed by ancient and modern philosophers, that none of the intellectual studies tend to cultivate a smaller number of the faculties in a generally more partial manner than mathematics, and that an exclusive study of mathematical sciences not only does not prepare, but absolutely incapacitates, the mind for the intellectual energies which philosophy and life require. "Dull as a mathematician," is a proverb current among Frenchmen, the most mathematical nation

of Europe. *Bayle*, the most subtle logician, has confessed, that he could never comprehend the demonstration of the first problem of *Euclid;* and the German philologist *Wolf*, absolutely destitute of all mathematical capacity, was convinced from experience that the more capable a mind was for mathematics, the more incapable was it for the other noble sciences. We know from experience, that an habitual story-teller prefers invention to description; some of the best writers of fiction prove very bad historians, because, long habituated to invent and narrate at the same time, they are incapable of narrating without inventing. A poet never vouchsafes to discuss, but is painting and colouring for effect. A logician is concerning himself exclusively about maturity, definition, and connecting of his ideas and arguments, but is apt to neglect his style, and thinks slightly of elegant expressions. Well conducted metaphysical researches tend to generate exact and methodical habits of thought. Men who in their youth, prompted by their own innate inclination, were reading poetry, are found to have a more vivid and coloured style, even when writing upon abstruse subjects. Men that take a delight in comical compositions, exhibit more cheerfulness of mind, and buoyancy of spirit, and their thoughts bear a more lively and playful appearance. Every-day experience teaches that practical life has a sobering influence upon the most brilliant and buoyant faculties of our mind.

There is another circumstance which augments greatly the puzzling variety of wits—it is the different order and time in which they expand or are coming to maturity. We are told that *Albertus Magnus* appeared for the first thirty years of his life remark-

ably dull and stupid, and it was not till he advanced to middle age that his mind expanded. *Chaucer's* genius was not fully developed till he was advanced in years. Generally the forthcoming of imaginative powers precedes the faculty of judgment. The fancy attains at an earlier period to the perfection of its beauty, power, and fruitfulness; but as it is the first to ripen, it is also the first to fade. It has already lost something of its bloom and freshness, and of that internal golden flame of the opal, before the sterner faculty has reached maturity; and is commonly withered, when these faculties still retain all their energy. It rarely happens that the fancy and the judgment grow together, the latter being slower in its development. It happens still more rarely that the judgment grows faster than the imagination; but the most difficult of all, the self-judgment, the knowledge of ourselves, of our intellectual capacities and moral inclinations, comes last, if it comes at all. We are, however, enabled to produce some remarkable cases of the maturity of judgment preceding the full development of imagination. *Bacon's* gigantic scheme of philosophical reform was planned while he was still very young. He early displayed in his works a great vigilance in observing, deep meditation, temperate and prematurely ripe judgment; but in richness of illustration, in variety of expression, in eloquence, his later writings are far superior. *Burke's* "Treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful," though it appeared when he was but twenty-five, is written in the style of a parliamentary report, whereas the "Thoughts on the Causes of the Existing Discontents," published when his judgment had reached its full maturity, shows that his eloquence was still in its

splendid dawn; even in his old age he discussed tariffs and treaties in the most fervid and brilliant language of romance. We may cite that indefatigable courtier and poet, *Edward Young*, of whom it is said that sixty years had strengthened and enriched his genius and augmented even the brilliancy of his fancy. *Dryden* was also one of those in whom the period of imagination does not precede, but follows the period of observation and reflection.

There are, moreover, qualities and deficiencies in the moral and intellectual character of men going inseparable, like twin-stars or like silence and darkness; for instance, fiery temper and weak judgment; hardness of heart is inseparable from narrowness of mind. Ardent faith goes in alliance with fiery imagination. Weak memory is often connected with a certain instinctive bias for generalization. It seldom happens to meet with a man that has got a just taste without a sound understanding. Ignorance and learning, both in a high degree, are often seen to co-exist in the same minds. The vast learning of *Bacon* did not prevent him from believing in witchcraft. There are men exhibiting a not uncommon union of scepticism and credulity; in the age of imperial Rome the highest reason was seen in company with the most abject superstition; astrology and witchcraft led captive minds which boasted of being emancipated from the idle terrors of the avenging gods. Louis XI., King of France, very acute and sagacious in all worldly pursuits, was childishly credulous and superstitious. It is not unusual to find an extraordinary capacity for mental labour combined with extreme indolence and reluctance to undertake it. *Dr. Johnson* seldom took to writing when not in want of money.

But there are also some qualities of the mind incompatible, conflicting, if not absolutely antagonistic, or seldom to be met together; as, for instance, a scoffing wit and a feeling heart, wit and passion being entirely incompatible. Magnificent versification and ingenious combinations rarely harmonize with the expression of deep feeling. In *Dryden* alone we have the sparkle and the heat together. A quick intelligence is rarely found connected with strong powers of judgment. A rapid thinker is never meditative. Men of a speculative turn of mind are rarely ready-witted, and hence very bad advisers in cases which require great celerity. Persons the most alert in discovering the flaws and defects in a work of genius are the least touched with its beauties. It is rare, says *Pascal*, that mathematicians are observant, and that observant minds are mathematical. Men celebrated for military prudence are often found to be headstrong statesmen. An impassioned mind prevents the understanding from ascertaining timely and judging rightly. A native quickness of apprehension is never supported by perseverance of attention. Very patient inquirers are but rarely endowed with great powers of intellect and freshness of mind. A poetical turn of mind is but rarely found allied with the scrutinizing, cautious, persevering, and deep-seeking spirit, capable of tracing out the hidden laws of nature. *Oersted*, who is an experimental philosopher, and, at the same time, a profoundly contemplative poet, who is extracting the beautiful from every branch of philosophy, is but a rare, if not a solitary, exception. A cunning mind is rarely found in connexion with a sound judgment. It is a rare occurrence to meet with a cunning man that is

honest, and as seldom with a wise man that is a knave. An intellect of great compass is but rarely deep. A man of great sensibility is rarely quick-sighted. A refined taste and a solid understanding are frequently disjoined, though they are not necessarily incompatible. Persons of sensibility and fancy are but rarely conclusive reasoners. There are, moreover, two kinds of intellectual powers rarely found to coexist in one mind: the demonstrative faculty and the inductive faculty.

V. Such interesting sets of observations, setting off different relations between our understanding and mind, enabling us to find a clue to mental capacities of men and natural propensities of the human mind, afford at the same time an incontrovertible evidence of the variety and disparity of the mental capacities of men, and show that of all the magnificent predictions of *Lord Bacon*, the only one which was not verified is, that if his method of making discoveries was adopted, little would depend on the degree of force or acuteness of any intellect; *that all minds would be reduced to one level;* that his method resembled a compass or a rule, which equalizes all hands, and enables the most unpractised person to draw a more correct circle or line than the best draftsman; for *Bacon's* inductive method has flourished during two centuries, and has produced none of this levelling. Till our days a great experimental philosopher performs the inductive process in a different way from an old superstitious woman; the interval between a man of talents and a dunce is as wide as ever, and is never more conspicuous than when they engage in researches requiring the use of induction.

Having to survey the whole range of mental excellences and deficiencies, from stupidity up to the highest class of human intelligences, I was soon aware that it was next to impossible to confine my range within the small circle of observations upon my own intellect; however, as a necessary outset of my inquiry, I began with observing my own qualities and deficiencies; and this was the first step in my career. Next I extended my observations to those with whom I had daily intercourse, and whose moral as well as intellectual qualities and deficiencies I could read with accuracy, and compare with observation upon my own mind; thus I went on with closely observing my chum, and soon extended my observations to all my school-fellows, and, as it generally happens, I began with remarking exclusively their faults and failings in morals, as well as their most striking intellectual deficiencies, being a confirmed "hater of fools," and having a precocious dislike of blockheads—or perhaps because the first fruits of observation upon men are most commonly found to issue in satire. This was, then, the second step of my investigations, which I entered into in early life. At the outset I had frequent occasions to note down a great many interesting—at least I thought them to be so—observations, but with time their number began to grow short, their stock did not correspond with my expectations, I was at a loss to find a general law—some clue to guide me; they seemed to me not to afford materials enough to build up a system with. However, the early habit of such observations was not without some profit, as it enabled me to frame many useful rules for developing my own abilities, and making up the deficiencies of some

faculties of my mind. For some subsequent years I have lost all relish for such a set of observations. Having finished my academical studies, I found no more opportunity of having about me so great a variety of persons, offering themselves with youthful candour and ingenuousness to my observations; I had to deal with grown-up people, who have learned to school their feelings, to veil their deficiencies, and only unawares and unconsciously offered some opening at which I could peep into their minds, so that from that time my observations were limited to what brief and partial glimpses into the human mind could afford.

But I soon hit upon some other means of satisfying my curiosity and following up my investigations. Examining, when in Italy, different Italian schools of painting, which from the fourteenth till the end of the sixteenth century have flourished under the blue skies of Ausonia, it struck me that the disparities and gradations of intellect might well be traced out in the performances of the celebrated Italian painters. The severe simplicity of the Tuscan school; the chaste conception, treated in a very glowing style, of the Roman; the brilliant, gorgeous, and voluptuous expression of the Venetian, are obviously creations of very different casts of mind. *Raphael* painting the Vatican *al frescoes*, made such rapid strides in his art, that while coming to the other end of his picture, new sides broke forth of his inexhaustible genius. Looking at the Last Judgment of *Michael Angelo* I saw a sculptor that is painting; in colouring, in conception, how unlike *Raphael* his contemporary! There is between them a greater distance than between *Dante* and *Ariosto*, and yet we cannot help admiring both, and in looking at their creations

with as much astonishment as delight. How can we account for such difference? The cause seems to lie deep in their respective minds. It struck me, that reflecting upon the checkered genius of great painters, I may be led to the discovery of some new qualities, peculiarities, and forms of genius. I found something of that sort of observation in the book of *Piles Royet*, "Idée du peintre parfait" (Paris, 1699), who pretends to teach how to appreciate the relative talents of great painters.*

However, I was soon aware, that not only in pictures of the great Italian masters, but also in poetry there are very obvious signs of the great disparity and variety of intellectual powers; the poetry of *Milton* and *Pope* broke forth from a very different cast of mind. *Spenser*, for instance, is a painter, whereas *Shakespeare* is a statuary of imitated nature. *Dante* is condensing all his thoughts and feelings in the facts he relates, and expresses himself invariably by images. *Lord Byron* does not catch the hues of surrounding objects, nor hold the mirror up to nature, but, like a volcano, throws gloomy grandeur and blazing light out of the inmost recesses of his proud soul. And this was one more progress in my inquiry. The sphere of my investigations widened the farther I proceeded,

* "Un autre auteur ('Fresnoy Caroli Alphonsis de arte Graphica liber. Paris, 1637; avec des notes par *de Piles*') a voulu redresser le systeme de *de Piles*, va plus loin que lui; il pense: qu'avec des observations fines et adroites sur les différentes espèces de talens, qu'il faut avoir pour reussir dans un genre et en combinant les effets, que produisent certaines qualité de l'esprit, on pourroit arriver aux élémens nécéssaires pour prononcer avec équité sur le mérite de plusieurs concurrens, ou pour apprécier la valeur relative des grands hommes qui ont courru la même carrière, en quel genre que ce soit."

opening some new field of inquiry, which induced me unconsciously to take a wider range. Ere long I became aware, that not only in pictures or poetry, but in the composition of prose-writers, especially of historians, moral philosophers, orators, as well as in metaphysical systems and autobiographies, we may ascertain striking features of the variety of mental capacities. The study of the works of *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, *Xenophontes*, *Demosthenes;* of *Aristotle* and *Plato*, of *Hume*, *Robertson*, and *Macaulay*, of *Swift* and *Bacon*, of the autobiography of *St. Austin*, the first book in which Christianity is portrayed as the all-absorbing passion of the soul; the autobiography of that intellectual giant *Richard Baxter*, down to that of *Joseph Smith*, the prophet of the Mormons or Latter-day Saints; the autobiography of *Lord Herbert*, that of *Denis Zachaire*, the alchemist, and of *Lilly* the astrologer; *Swift's* Journal to *Stella*, the autobiographies of *J. J. Rousseau*, *Priestley*, *William Jones*, *Colley Cibber*, *Lackington*, *Alfieri*, *Benvenuto Cellini*, and many others that have given their own miniatures and the self-supplied key to their mental character;* letters of *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, letters of *Cowper*, who often deli-

* *Gibbon* gives, in his memoirs, a quaint account of his intellectual powers: "Wit, I have none. My imagination is rather strong than pleasing; my memory both capacious and retentive. The shining qualities of my understanding are extensiveness and penetration. I want both quickness and exactness. My genius is better qualified for the deliberate compositions of the closet, than for the extempore discourse of parliament. An unexpected objection would disconcert me; and as I am incapable of explaining to others what I do not thoroughly understand myself, I should be meditating while I ought to be answering." It is, perhaps, most on account of this deficiency of ready wit, that *Sir James Mackintosh* thought that *Gibbon* might have been cut out of a corner of *Burke's* mind without his missing it.

neates the finer features of his understanding with all the industry of a stranger, as well as memoirs of his early life—a harrowing and fearful chronicle of the growth of the dark cloud overshadowing his brain; the letters of *Lord Byron*, and in general the works of eminent authors;—suggested many new ideas, or put on the trace of very interesting observations upon the human intellect; for though the works of an author may not always give us a just image of the whole intellect of the man, however, it never fails of disclosing its main features and the exact measure of mind, and, moreover, gives us an insight into his intellectual character, native as well as modified by his profession, with which the style is intimately connected; an energetic seaman having a different mode of writing from a hesitating judge.

But, however, these works of art or deep investigation did not enable me to take to pieces the whole web of the human mind. I found more in those spontaneous fruits of the human intellect, as letters to intimate friends, where the heart and the understanding are kept so tenderly near each other, where the unrestrained mind pours out its feelings, and shows its genuine face, and which exhibit the intellect in all its moods and phases by its own utterances, though they may sometimes happen to be coloured above or below the truth. That there may exist a stupendous difference among the works of art or reflection indited for the public, and letters to intimate friends, we have a striking instance in the celebrated "Memoirs of Mirabeau," one of the founders of the sect of Economists in France; his twenty-two works are dull, heavy, tedious, and unreadable, written in an insipid, tiresome, confused, and intoler-

able style; whereas he is the writer of the most lively and interesting letters, in a style, which for ease, happy unconstraint, and raciness, have scarcely a rival.

There are, moreover, very interesting observations suggested by national proverbs, common sayings, and old pennywise saws, which are the first attempts of men to higher notions, and the quintessence of their observations upon the human mind, reflecting its inward nature; which contain, in few words, the hoarded wisdom of former ages, and constitute the manual of "hobnailed philosophy." In axioms, moreover, which, passing into a proverb,* have attained the sanction of common sense, I hoped to find some clue to guide me through the mazes of this startling variety in mental excellences and deficiencies.

Besides, we find traces of this kind of observation

* The nativity of a proverb is a secret guarded by nature with its usual success: nobody could say who is its author, where and when it was born, how it came into circulation, till it has become the common property of all. Everybody applying it to a particular circumstance in conversation, bears upon his countenance a slight shadow of satisfaction of having uttered something witty, if not strictly new. The only exception to that rule known to us is *Swift*, who had an odd humour of making extempore proverbs. Observing that a gentleman, in whose garden he walked with some friends, seemed to have no intention to request them to eat any of the fruit, *Swift* observed, that it was a saying of his dear grandmother, "Always pull a peach when it is within your reach;" and, helping himself, he induced the company to follow his example. At another time he framed "an old saying and true," for the benefit of a person who had fallen from his horse into the mire—"The more dirt the less hurt." The man rose much consoled; but as he happened to be a collector of proverbs, he wondered he had never heard that one before.

in every language, that faithful mirror of our mental faculties, and great organ of the world's intellect; giving a striking evidence that men early busied themselves, more than we may suppose, with a close observation of such differences, and have made, in remotest times, very nice distinctions in the capacities, qualities, and deficiencies of intellects—distinctions which are lying by, embodied and preserved in language, as insects of the antediluvian ages in amber. The ancient Greeks used to distinguish τὸ κρῖναι, the common-sense judgment, which men may pass upon subjects lying beyond their range, from the full theoretical or practical knowledge which enables men not only to judge of a thing when done, but to carry it out themselves; and thus the people at large were considered competent judges of the conduct of their magistrates, though they might be very unfit to be magistrates themselves. Besides the most striking differences in the qualities of intellect—as common sense, understanding, reason, wisdom—we find in our language very nice distinctions of its deficiencies, as an idiot, an imbecile, a fool, a silly man, a natural, an innocent, a wiseacre, a dunce, a witless man, a dolt, a numskull, a nizy, booby, cudden, oaf, gump, noodle, tony, bullcalf, clod-poll, shutle-pate, goose-cap, an ass, a simpleton, a noddy, a ninny, a ninnyhammer, a half-witted, dull-witted, hard-witted, a dull-head, bull-head, dunder-headed, addle-headed, a giddy-head, beetle-head, a lackbrain, mad-brained, drowsy-headed, dull-pated, thick-skulled, crock-brained, hair-brained, rattle-headed, muddle-headed, wrong-headed, broken-witted, harem-scarem brain, greenhorn, zany, an after-wit, a driveller, a dotard. We have also in our language a great many expressions marking differences in the

qualities of intellect, as, mother's wit, sound judgment, clear head, acute understanding, sober reason, reach of view, inventive talent, genius. There are besides some terms designating a close connexion between some moral and mental deficiencies, as, a coxcomb, a wiseling, a prig, a liar; and there is the word wisdom, the only term designating an intellectual pre-eminence, which necessarily includes virtue.

If, however, we were to form our judgment from the number of synonyms, it appears that men were in general more struck with the deficiencies of intellects—seem to have directed their attention to them with malicious curiosity, and to have observed them with more pertinacity than their excellences, and thus have made better and more nice distinctions among the former; for the ridiculous parts of intellectual character lie on the surface, and cannot be missed; he that runs may read them; and it appears, moreover, that every century and every class of society had contributed its share to the stock of observations and distinctions of this latter kind.

But I was not late in perceiving that often writers may think justly, and yet write without any effect—that a splendid style may cover a vacuity of thought; and hence that differences and disparities in the human intelligences are still more apparent in conversation, conduct, and actions, than in writings and set compositions; nay, it often happens that folly, which contrives to lurk unnoticed in speech and writing, will peep out in our actions, whose declarations are many times as explicit, and always more sure, than those that are contained in words. *Rousseau*, a philosopher in his writings, was but a petulant child in real life. *Dr. Johnson* said once of *Oliver Goldsmith*,

that "nobody was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had one." *Lord Rochester* says of Charles II. that he never said a foolish thing, and never did a wise one.

Reading the historians of different nations, I could not help observing, that as there is a great variety in the moral character of different nations, which is set off in their history, so there must be the same difference in their mental capacities, as is apparent, not only in their respective literatures and popular stories, but in the structure of their languages, in their religious observances, in the dark mysteries of their traditions and local superstitions, and in their customary as well as statute laws. But as literature is the standard and mirror of the intellectual reach and capacities of civilized nations, the only means of forming any judgment about mental capacities of barbarous nations is the account of travellers. Thus we know, for instance, that a savage takes his religion on trust, but that almost all his other notions are the result of his personal exertions; hence it comes that among savages the oldest man is generally the wisest, because his faculties are only developed through the long process of a very limited experience, and by dint of personal observation.

Thus I saw opening before me a wide range of interesting and new observations, which, when completed, may form a distinct part of the philosophy of the human mind, founded on genuine observation, without any sophistical accompaniments and elucidations, and which may give rise to a new science—"natural history of the human intellects"—which is not to be found on the great list of human sciences formed by *Aristotle*, and completed by *Bacon* and *d'Alembert*.

There is a book of the Spaniard, *Juan Hurat*, "Examen de los Ingenios," in which I expected to find some valuable observations and useful information; but I was sadly disappointed, as he is considering mental powers only in reference to physiognomy and temperament. According to his notions, short or faithful memory, imagination, and wit, proceed from dryness or humidity of the brain, or fiery temperament. He is of opinion that of all the aliments, salt is the most efficacious means of improving our wit; a specific which he seems to have neglected, or to have tried without success. It would be superfluous to expatiate on reasons which prevented me from deriving any profit from the contents of that book.

Dr. Walter Charleton published, towards the end of the seventeenth century, his "Brief Discourse Concerning the Different Wits of Men," in which he attributes the varieties of talents which are found among men, to the differences in the form, size, and quality of their brains. I found more information bearing, though indirectly, upon my subject, in some biographies, autobiographies, in the literary as well as political history of the different European nations, in the "History of Speculative Philosophy," by *Tiedeman*, *Tenneman*, and *Dugald Stewart*, in *Lord Brougham's* "Lives of Men of Letters, Science, and Eminent Statesmen." I availed myself of sundry observations fit to be brought to bear upon the subject of my inquiry, that lie scattered in many philosophical as well as critical works, observations that dropped unconsciously from the pen of some distinguished writers, who appear to be familiar with inquiries connected with the philosophy of the human mind.

Having no guide to lead me on these unfrequented ranges of inquiry among the mazes where intellectual

excellences and deficiencies are mingled in endless variety of proportion, and innumerable modes of combination, besides a sense of inadequate abilities, which I brought to this hard task, has so far grown upon me as its execution advanced, that I would fain have abandoned it to abler hands. However, considering that I happened to open a new path for the future *Linnæus* of human intellects—a path leading to the knowledge of men, and what is in them most noble and immortal, though I may not have been successful in classifying what was insulated, and giving unity and system to those fragments of desultory knowledge, I had, however, the rare felicity, as *Lord Bacon* qualifies it, of having been present at the laying of the first stone of a new natural science, and have laid open a new field of research. Such encouraging considerations made me persist, and inveigled to publishing that *essay*, compound of facts that came under my own immediate observation, or were ascertained and set down by others; and I fondly hope that these little flamand pictures of different deficiencies, excellences, and biases of the human understanding will be found true to nature, as they were mostly drawn from living sitters.

This essay may also prove useful to those who would wish to see a likeness of their own intellect brought out in stronger relief, and reflected in a kind of mirror, showing faithfully its reach, bias, and excellences, as well as deficiencies, indicating the natural bent of their capacity, which may suggest some practical means for its further improvement, or for making up its deficiencies.

CHAPTER II.

Mental capacities of different nations — The facial angle of Camper—Dr. Prichard's types of cranial conformation —The Bushmen—The primitive inhabitants of Australia —The Hottentots—The Negroes—The North-American Western Indians — Indians of California — Aborigines of North America at the moment of the discovery of America by Columbus—The Puris, or Brazilian Indians.

Asiatics: Aborigines of Egypt — Turks — Arabs — Persians Hindoos—Chinese.

Europeans: Spaniards—Portuguese—Italians—French—Germans—Englishmen — Welshmen — Scotchmen—Irishmen —Anglo-Americans—Poles—Bohemians—Wends—Russians — Hungarians — South-Slavonians — Ancient and Modern Greeks.

That nations differ greatly in mental capacities is a fact too obvious and apparent to require any proof. Though the language is the main clue to guide us through the labyrinth of that discrepancy, the minute shades of it may, however, be traced out, not only by studying the structure of their languages, but by closely examining their respective literatures, their religious tenets and observances, their superstitions, their civil and criminal laws, and their traditions and history.

Lord Bacon has observed that the inhabitants of the south are in general more ingenious than those

of the north; but that where the native of the cold climate has genius, he rises to a higher pitch than can be reached by the southern wits. This observation goes to suggest that climate is extending its powerful influence even over the mental faculties of men, and hence, that it is not only among individuals, but among nations also, that wide differences in mental powers and endowments of the mind may be traced out, and that different nations manifest a different capacity for intellectual, moral, and social improvement.

As mental powers had been supposed to be connected with the capacity of the interior part of the skull, and of the size of the corresponding lobe of the brain, the celebrated anatomist *Camper* invented the facial angle included between two lines: one of them drawn from the orifice of the ear to the base of the nose; the other joining the most advanced points of the forehead and of the upper jaw-bone. Thus, while the facial angle in the skull of living Europeans averages 80°, in the ideal heads of the Grecian gods it averages 90°. *Camper* inferred from his measurements, that a regular gradation is exhibited by the different races of men, connecting the highest type with the apes: the facial angle of a Kalmuck being 75°, that of a Negro only 70°, and that of different species of apes being 64°, 63°, 60°, or according to the more correct measurements of Professor *Owen*, 35° and 30°.

Dr. Prichard has shown that there are but three leading types of cranial conformation: the *oval* or elliptical, termed Caucasian by *Blumenbach*, is distinguished by the symmetry of its form. The cranial cavity is large, the forehead full and elevated, the face small in proportion, indicating the predominance

of the intellectual powers over the instinctive propensities connected with sensation. The Greeks are the most favourable example of this symmetry. The *pyramidical*, corresponding with that termed Mongolian by *Blumenbach*, is most characteristically seen in the Esquimaux, who track their way upon the polar snow. The greater part of the races of this type are nomadic; some of them are wandering over the vast plains of high Asia, whilst others creep along the shores of the icy sea. We encounter this type again in Hottentots and Bushmen of southern Africa, who were formerly a nomadic people. The third type was named by *Dr. Prichard* "prognathous," on account of the forward prominence of the jaws. This character is best seen in some Negro races of the Guinea coast, and in some of the Polynesian and Australian races, and is remarkable on account of unusually developed apparatus for hearing. Nations belonging to this type of cranial conformation are on the lowest scale of civilization, for the most part hunters, the savage inhabitants of forests, dependent for food on the chase or upon the accidental produce of the soil.

Having measured and compared the capaciousness of the skulls of the Negro or Australian savage up to the Greek, let us now proceed to examine their corresponding mental capacities, without inquiring whether the Negro is separated by an impassable barrier from the Caucasian race, conspicuous by an undeniable superiority both in intellectual and moral endowments.

The Bushmen, or perhaps the Aborigines of Australia, and the Greeks, appear to be placed on the extremes of the scale of mental capacities.

The BUSHMEN, who appear to be a degraded caste of the Hottentot race, making no use of fire, living in caves and holes, and supporting their miserable existence on wild roots, on the eggs of ants, on lizards, snakes, and the most loathsome insects, are at the bottom of the scale of civilization, and mental as well as moral endowments. They are said to be incapable of reasoning and in total want of foresight. Their language is said to consist only of a few guttural tones, and capable of expressing but few ideas.

Australia is a queer country, where the valleys are cold, and the mountain-tops warm; where the swans are black, cherries grow with the stones outside, and the delicious-looking pear is solid wood; where bees have no sting, flowers no smell; where birds do not sing, trees have no shade; where animals have pockets; where quadrupeds with ducks' bill are laying eggs, birds have brooms in place of a tongue, owls screech in the daytime, and cuckoos sing at night; where gold is to be had for the asking, and milk not for love or money. The primitive inhabitants of that golden colony, wandering along the rivers abounding with fish, called *Papuas*, form the most unintellectual species of the human race. With their thick prominent lips, sunken eyes, high cheek-bones, calveless legs, an unsightly prominent abdomen, club-shaped feet, and an extraordinary thickness of cranium, they constitute a link between man and the baboon, whose cunning they emulate, without any of the higher attributes which distinguish even savages in the other parts of the southern hemisphere. It is a barbarous race, deaf alike to the lessons of religion or civilization. Even the missionary has given them up in despair. They are remarkable for the dulness of their intellect, and according to *Mr. Ullathorne*, more so by the total

lack of the faculty of attention and following on the same train of thought. They build no houses, nor will they inhabit them when built. An overhanging rock, a cave, a strip of bark, is their only shelter. Their canoe is a wide slip of bark tied together and stuffed with clay. They live on fish, snakes, grubs, gum, and roots. The only trace of their ingenuity is the net woven by the women, and a singular weapon, called "boomerang," which thrown at a distance of forty yards, rebounds into the air for fifty feet, and describing a curve, drops at the feet of the thrower. This singular and puzzling weapon, whose action it would be difficult even for a mathematician to account for, originated in kangaroo-hunting. They have no religion and no idol, but believe that the white men are reincarnations of their own relatives. They practise polygamy, and are said to possess many singular institutions resembling those of the North-American Indians. One great obstruction to the improvement of their social state is said to lie in the complexity of their landed tenure. There is a slight difference, says *Mr. Butler Earp*, in some of the tribes, in point of intellect, or rather, in the want of it.

The *Hottentots*, by their looks, countenance, and anatomical characters, form a transition from the genus man to the genus orang, and consequently to the apes. According to *Mr. Barrow* ("Travels in South Africa"), they have words to designate the sun, the moon, and the stars; but this constitutes all their astronomical notions. The partition of time, based on the rotation of celestial bodies, is beyond their apprehension. Their reckoning of time is limited to one day. Wishing to mark out the hour of the day, they point to the place of the heavens where the sun was to be found about that time. Some few events constitute their chrono-

logy; any other occurrence they put before or after those events. Seasons are designated by the numbers of moons, or by the time before or after the crop of roots, *iris edulis*, which formerly constituted their staple food. Not one of the Hottentots in attendance upon *Mr. Barrow* was capable of computing beyond the number five, or making any computation without the help of his fingers. They are, however, far from being of an absolutely dull understanding; they speak Dutch with readiness and fluency, and are often employed by Europeans in some commercial business requiring judgment and capacity. A Hottentot, intrusted by *Vander Stet* (one of the early governors of the Cape) with carrying on a large trade in cattle with tribes living at a great distance, generally executed his commission with great success. Besides, they are excellent shots, and excel in tracing out a trail; are very sharp-sighted, will perceive a deer afar off, and pursue the flying bee to a great distance, in order to discover its hive.

The *Negroes*, a light-hearted race, are more advanced, though there is no denying that they are, in point of mental powers, naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of blacks, and there are among them but few individuals eminent either in action or speculation; and these excite wonder as being something out of the order of nature. "I should expect," says *Dr. Channing*, "from the African race, if civilized, less energy, less courage, less intellectual originality, than in ours; but more amiableness, tranquillity, gentleness, and content." However, we know that a grown-up negro has no more wit than our urchin twelve years old; and that

if by chance his mental faculties begin to dawn, and seem to expand, he soon returns to his childish habits of thought, and delights only in dancing. *Negroes*, says *Mr. Robin* ("Travels in Louisiana"), have but a very limited understanding; an European is hardly capable of conceiving such a great deficiency of sense and such dulness of mental faculties. He has met with some negroes unable to count five pieces of money. Few of them could answer to very obvious questions: as, how old is he; how many children he has got; how long it is since he had left his country; when did he belong to such a planter; or was transferred to another. Having no notion of the past, they don't trouble themselves about the future; are exceedingly careless; will waste and destroy their garments, never thinking of their coming utility. They destroy everything they can take hold of with the greatest indifference. They will wantonly fling away a thing which but a minute before seemed to afford them great pleasure; but they are very sensitive to the power of music.

The *North-American Western Indians*, a race of hunters rapidly vanishing from the face of the earth, have no literature, no written or established laws, very few religious notions; but the structure of their nineteen dialects gives some clue to their mental character. The prevalence of vowels in their language is very remarkable; women have for certain things their own terms, different from those used by men; they have particular verbs to designate the actions of animals, and others that are used for designating the actions of inanimate things. Stately self-possession, and utter indifference to melody, are two most remarkable features of their mind. There is a chival-

rous spirit in these copper-coloured rangers of the western prairies, not to be exceeded by the European chivalry. They have some uses of ancient chivalry among them; as a page performing the duty of a squire, taking charge of his horse, arms, and accoutrements. Hawking with a falcon is their favourite amusement. They challenge each other, and run a tilt; and in general they have a very clear notion and a vivid sense of honour. The *Pawnees*, *Blackfeet*, and *Crows* of Alanquin race, the *Comanches*, *Apaches*, *Arapahoes*, *Wakoes*, and *Shoshones*, which are the Bedouins of the great western prairies, are stamped with the indubitable seal of nobility on their brow: gentlemen by nature, they are extremely well-bred, when not given to drinking. An Indian mind seems to be of a widely different cast; except in suffering or oppression, they will never condescend to listen to "the smooth honey words of pale-faced sages," or else will argue upon every dogma and point of faith, and remain unconvinced; for that reason, the Christian religion has proved as yet quite unavailing to soften down the fierce and occasionally cruel tempers of this untutored race. All the tribes of North America believe in one God; but thinking that human nature is too gross to communicate with the Almighty, "Kishe Manitou," they pray generally through the intervention of the elements, or even of certain animals, which are made known to them in their dreams. Women do not participate in the deeper mysteries of their religion. They are not totally deprived of the notion of history, which with them consists of tradition carefully preserved. The *Shoshones* have a fond and lucid recollection of the far countries whence they have emigrated.

Few of those Indians are civilized; to the latter belong the *Indians of California*, who, according to *Mr. Bryant's* account, are naturally filthy, careless, and of a limited understanding. In the small arts they are not deficient in ideas of imitation, but they never will be inventors. Their true character is that of being revengeful and timid; consequently they are very much addicted to treachery. They have no knowledge of benefits received, and ingratitude is common among them. The education they receive in their infancy (from the *Padre*) is not the proper one to develop the reason; and if it were, I do not believe them capable of any good impression.

The *Aborigines of North America*, at the moment of its discovery, had a mild expression of countenance, a prepossessing appearance, a gentle smile, a beautiful form, with good complexion, softness of body, and a general gracefulness of movement. In many parts of America the manners, and perhaps the whole aspect of the people, suggested the notion of persons of decayed fortune, who had once been more prosperous and formidable than they were now, or who had been the offshoot of a more defined and forcible people. The rumour of a deluge was largely current in some parts of the Indies. Then the singular correspondence in point of length of the Mexican year, 365¼ days, with that of the Egyptians, the five complimentary days corresponding to the epagomena of the Memphian year; the resemblance of the Teocalli, or god-houses, to the temple of *Jupiter Belus*, with many other strange resemblances in rites and *modes of thought and expression*, lead us to suppose that these nations of the new world had a common origin with the eastern nations of the old world. In some

of the Indian tribes, things were found which reminded the traveller of the highest products and the highest thoughts of civilization; hieroglyphics, statues, carvings, pictures, works of metal, and delicate fabrics of cotton. Various kinds of bread were to be seen among them, and not unskilful modes of cultivation. In dances and in song they excelled. Moreover, some of the most elevating and some of the most subtle and far-fetched notions that have ever entered into the minds of men, were to be found domesticated among the Indians; thus, prayer, prophecy, monastic life, the confession of sins to appointed confessors, the immortality of the soul and hopes of future state of bliss, belief in witchcraft, and the propitiation of idols by living sacrifices, the deepest thoughts and the wildest superstitions. (The Conquerors of the New World.)

The *Puris*, Indians of Brasilia, are, according to *Mrs. Ida Pfeiffer*, still uglier than the Negroes. Their colour is light bronze; the visage is thick, somewhat compressed. The forehead is broad and low, the nose somewhat flattened, the eyes small and slit-like, the mouth large, with very thick lips. To show off all this still further, the whole visage is overspread with a peculiar air of stupidity, expressed by an ever-open mouth. Their language is extremely poor; they can only count one and two, and then have always to repeat these numbers when they want to express one larger. For expressing *to-day*, *to-morrow*, and *yesterday*, they have but the word *day*, the further meaning being expressed by signs. Their organ of smell is highly developed. They smell the trace of the Negro on the leaves of the trees; and if he does not succeed in reaching a stream where he

can swim a long way, he seldom escapes the Puri set to dog him.

Stability is the stamp of *Asiatical* nations; they display little or no spirit of curiosity or speculation; the love of travelling, visiting of the ruins and remains of former grandeur, and tracing the history of ancient nations, are with them subjects of wonder. Those who rank highest among them for genius, have employed their talents in works of fiction; for it is by their means that "the ear of authority may be approached by the tongue of wisdom."

Aborigines of Egypt.—The *Fellaheen*, agricultural labourers, serfs of the soil now, as well as in the time of Pharaos, are probably descendants of the ancient agricultural caste of Egypt; if so, they have along with their Nile and their Pyramids, outlasted several religious systems, many dynasties and empires. They are a coarse-featured, heavy race, and their countenance is seldom lighted up by intelligence. In general the expression of their physiognomy is one of childish simplicity, with an occasional gleam of clownish cunning. One of their physical peculiarities is the heavy eyelid, that protects and half closes a very keen eye. The dazzling reflection of the sun, from their parched fields, may exaggerate this defect, and induce a habit of winking. It belongs however to the race; and in the inhabitants of the town becomes a beauty, giving a languid, pleasing expression to the almond-shaped eye in moments of repose. Their physiognomy exhibits a remarkable mobility; when the Egyptian is moved by passion, his eyes acquire a goggle-shape, the heavy eyelid shrinks, and the ball seems to start forward; the apparently rigid nostril distends, and seems to express all inflections and

shades of feeling; the placid mouth, model of that of the sphynx, is contorted to a most ludicrous extent, and the scanty beard, unfolding like a fan, assumes quite a meteoric appearance. But such emotion is suddenly calmed down into placidity, without leaving any trace on the countenance.

The *Turks*, a nation noted for gravity and serious deportment, appear to have particular habits of thought. A dense and misty chaos encompasses their minds, as was the case with Europeans in the middle of the thirteenth century, when the light of truth was dawning and throwing its oblique rays upon the human mind, dispelled slowly the darkness, creating at the same time prolonged shades which exist till our days. The Turkish intellect is fettered by the Koran; even their moral faculties are stunned, and but half-developed by its baneful and overwhelming influence, as was the European mind by Aristotelian theology. Nothing in the history of their civilization bears so striking resemblance as the state of the human mind in the middle-ages in the whole of Europe, and the state of mind in Turkey of our days; the Turks are just now in the thirteenth century of their era, which in point of their civilization and the progress of their mental development corresponds exactly with our thirteenth century; as with us it was *ipse dixit*, as in Europe of that century, the doctrines of Thomists and Scottists, were not only the head-fountain of theology, but included all human knowledge, astronomy, and physics not excepted, so it is just now with Turks—the words: it is written; it stands so in the Koran—finish all discussion, hush and stifle all misgivings. The Turks are now in the very moment of a painful transition, not unlike that of the creation of the world described by

Milton, when some great animals and plants began to come forth out of the chaos. They are longing for the European advanced civilization, but afraid of introducing novelties into their antiquated system of society. They wish two things impossible to co-exist or to be reconciled, and appear to have no courage of running the risk—to lose some of the old advantages for the sake of those that are considered and believed as concomitant to the new order of things; hence they look upon those changes, coming on by starts, with great anxiety and suspicion.

In the discussion the Turks never make use of syllogisms, though they are acquainted with Aristotle; in place of an argument, they come forward with a historical fact, or prefer repeating an apologue, or will cite some passages of a moralist or a poet. Metaphysics have made but little progress among them. Though their countenance is that of permanent placidity and silent gravity, though they bear the appearance of cogitating, they are far from being a contemplative people, no great idea has ever originated from them. An Osmanli is not given to speculation; he is musing rather than meditating; he prefers to imagine, to fancy, than to sift, fathom, to penetrate or unriddle. The laws of nature occupy but very little the thoughts of the learned Osmanli, whose mind is domineered by fatalism, as were the ancient Greeks in heroical ages; even ignorant physicians and quacks are considered in Turkey only as the instruments of divine decrees.

Women are excluded from their paradise, as well as from their society; hence it comes that their language has no gender. The Turkish poesy is composed of a great number of apologues, fables, and fairy tales;

they have however no epic, and still less a dramatic poetry. They employ the poetical rhythm in their numerous historical compositions; but there is no trace of critic or philosophy in their history. Turkish historians are slovenly relating their facts, without ever condescending to inquire into causes and effects; they never trace a revolution to its source, never make any attempt at sketching out their conspicuous characters, as if the Koran, forbidding to paint human likenesses to limners, had extended this prohibition to historians. The history of the destruction of the Janissaries of *Muhammed Assad-Effendi* is perhaps a solitary instance of a Turkish historian, who presumes "to give the charger of his thoughts the bridle, and let him run on the field of observation."

The *Arabs*, who combine primitive simplicity with the refined feeling of civilization, are always young; it is the only race that never withers; but nature itself has limited the development of the moral and intellectual capacities of that nation in a way it never is able to overstep. They are now the same people as they were at the dawn of history, in times of Moses, and before Muhammed. Their rare revolutions consisted of an eruption once in a thousand years into the civilized world. Tradition is with them the only means of disseminating knowledge. They are now relating of their Antar—a favourite hero of the Bedoueens—and contrasting his valour with the effeminacy of the Persian courtiers, with the same vivid pleasure as they did before Muhammed. The sun has set, the dew has somewhat wetted the thirsty ground; but the air is still glowing and silent, as if anxiously expecting the refreshing evening breeze; the white beams of the moon begin to steal over the lately

flushed and empurpled scene. Some of the assembled Arabs are seated on saddles, some squatted in groups upon the ground, some standing amidst the crumbling pile of a forgotten and nameless town, and are leaning against its fragments. A poet is reciting a visit of Antar to the temple of the fire-worshippers, and his adventures among the courtiers of Nushirvan. This great Arabian tale, the Iliad of the desert, was composed in the period antecedent to the prophet; it describes the desert before the Koran, and shows how little the Arabians were changed by the adoption of Islamism. They have heard that tale a thousand times; but always enjoy it, are crying and laughing with the same heartiness. In all their countenances, in their breast heaving with contending passions, in their quivering features and flashing eyes, in every mouth open with absorbing suspense, is strongly expressed a wild and vivid excitement, the heat of sympathy, and a ravishing delight. One must have seen them to form an idea, how they are apt of being alternately excited, roused and sobered down in quick succession; how tenderness is soon followed by anger, a ringing laugh by tears; how they suspend their breath and are fetching heavy sighs; how they sympathise with all the feelings of the hero, and share all his joys and tribulations; how all their sunburned and wild countenances assume a fierce and animated expression; you see them all bend forwards towards the reciter; many spring up and wave their yatagans in ecstacy, some lay their hands on their swords, as the ardour of their poet begins to communicate itself to the audience. This is a great dramatical exhibition, in which spectators are at the same time actors. If their favourite hero is in

danger, they shout simultaneously—*La, la, la, istagfer Allah!*—no, no, God help him! When Antar, in the tournament, overthrew the famous Greek knight, who had travelled from Constantinople to beard the court of Persia; when he caught in his hand the assassin spear of the Persian satrap, envious of his prowess, and returned it to his adversary's heart; when he shouted from his saddle that he was the lover of Ibla, and the first horseman of the age, the audience exclaim with rapturous earnestness: It is true, it is true! also they are guaranteeing the assertions of a hero who lived, loved, and fought more than fourteen hundred years ago. They will listen for ever to the account of his forays, when he raised the triumphant cry of his tribe: Oh, by Abi! oh, by Adnan! or the narration of the camels he captured, the men he slew, and the maidens to whose charms he was indifferent. But the favourite scene with them is Antar dining with the King of Persia after his victory; he is asking the courtiers the name of every dish, and whether the king dines so every day. He bares his arms and chucks the food into his mouth without ever moving his jaws.

The Arabs are a very impressionable people, gay, witty, vivacious, very susceptible and acute; have a poetical mind, and a musical ear very sensible to the beauties of their language. As they returned now to their primitive scale of civilization, we have but two means of ascertaining the force and compass of their mental powers—their language and their literature, both very rich, which seem to indicate that they have got more brilliant and fertile imagination, more lively fancy, than sober judgment and depth of intellect. Their sciences were borrowed from the

Greeks; but having blindly imitated the Grecian method of investigating the laws of nature, they were debarred from all progress; for instead of observation and experiments, they took to commenting upon what the Greeks had advanced. In history, they did not go beyond poetical tradition; and the literature of ancient Greece, more valuable than their sciences, could not be brought to bear upon the cultivation of their mind.

Their northern neighbours, *Syrians*, are said to be at once imaginative and subtle.

Persians, a handsome race of men, fond of decorating their persons, with an unconquerable antipathy for sea, have neither shade to protect them from the heat of summer, nor fuel to save them from the cold of winter. Their genius is more volatile and lively than that of any other nation of the East. They have smooth and pliant manners, are very cheerful and sociable, take a great delight in familiar conversation, where they display more wit and brilliancy than any other Asiatic nation. They are powerfully affected by that which is present, forgetful of the past, and careless of the future. Quick in observation, and correct when they give themselves leisure to examine the principles of their decision, but rather inclined to draw their conclusions too rashly and hastily. In general, they are in talent and natural capacity equal to any nation in the world, and education could put them on a level in feeling, honesty, and the higher qualities, with any of the Christian more progressed nations. Almost every man in Persia is acquainted with their national literature, especially with their poetry, tales, and fables, all remarkable by their Asiatic splendour of diction. *Firdousee* excels in

describing a battle; his tales of love are often delightful, and nothing can exceed his description of scenery. *Sâdee*, their great favourite, is almost always simple and clear. *Hafiz*' odes are sung by the young and the joyous, while the Soofee spies out in their context a mystical meaning. Allusions to those poets are very common in conversation. Eminent poets, historians, astrologers, wits, and reciters of stories and fables, are not only admitted in the first circles, but honoured.

All ranks in Persia are brought up to admire show and parade, and they are more likely to be actuated by the dictates of imagination and vanity than of sober reason and judgment. Their style of exaggeration communicates its character to their habits of thought, and even opinions and actions. Amidst the clouds of tropes and metaphors with which even their diplomatical papers are enveloped, it is sometimes impossible to discover their meaning. In the luxuriance of their imagination they have highly embellished the more sober compositions of the Hindus. The wandering tribes of Persia despise learning, and the inhabitants of hamlets and villages have seldom an opportunity of acquiring it. The inhabitants of Isfahan are reputed quick, intelligent, and crafty, often supplying their want of courage by their address; almost every man above the lowest order among them can read and write, and artizans and shopkeepers are often as familiar as those of the higher ranks with the works of their favourite poets. The studious youth of Isfahan, *Tâlib-ool-Ilm*, may be seen in crowds reciting stanzas, or discussing some obscure dogmas of philosophy and religion. People of Isfahan, the worst soldiers of Persia, are remark-

able for the boldness of their language in the field of argument, and have great confidence in their ready wit and talent for repartee.

Persians, though a priest-ridden people, are however divided into a great many religious sects. Besides, persons of high rank, remarkable by their polemical propensities, and especially literary men, surpass the *mullahs* in learning and argument; and while the government, jealous of their overpowering influence on the minds of the people, is anxiously undermining their authority, persons distinguished by their high social position and learning, are censuring privately their corrupt practices, and ridicule their evil ways with that cutting irony which characterizes Persian wit.

The *Hindoos*, who never were conquerors or navigators, reproduce the mental characteristics of the infancy of the human race, when the spirit of credulity is predominating. They are now what the Greeks have been before *Pisistratus*, or the Europeans in the middle-ages, when reason was overshadowed and kept in bondage by a strong belief; they are in our days in that state of human intellect when miracles are alone plausible. Any explanation by natural causes is not only offensive to their religious feelings, but absolutely repugnant to their reason, as contrary to the mode of interpreting phenomena to which their intellects have got accustomed from their infancy, and which lies within the limits of their understanding. With them, the directly religious interpretation of nature is paramount; every phenomenon is referred to the personal agency of a hidden supernatural power. Such a method of interpreting nature appears to them natural and probable; whereas

any other method of accounting for them is reckoned incredible. They are, besides, always grave, sullen, moody, gloomy, given to meditation, and like brooding over the creations of their own fancy. The Indian climate, relaxing and weakening the nerves, makes them love solitude and dreamy thoughts.

Their northern neighbours, the *Thibetains*, are very religious, and have pantheistical notions, which constitute the foundation of Buddhaism.

Chinese. — Stability is the stamp of Asiatical nations; but the mummified Chinese seem to us on that account a rare ethnological phenomenon. Their monosyllabic and aptotic language, a great monument of antediluvian speech, by far the most inflexible of all languages, has preserved in a fixed and crystalized state, and presents the earliest stage in the development of speech, in which every word corresponded to, or represented, a substantial object in the outward world. Since the time they are known in Europe, they appear to have made no progress in civilization, arts, and sciences,—amongst others, in astronomy, which has a close connexion with their religious and political institutions,—though they have preceded all European nations. Like all Asiatics, they have no history, and a very faulty chronology. However, it wanted many centuries of exertion and progress to come up even to their state of civilization. What has arrested at once every kind of improvement of their mind, chilled their imagination, and benumbed their intellect, rendering it like the billows of the Arctic Sea, unchangeable and uniform, is not easy to be accounted for. Is it the conquest of China by Mantchou Tartars? or their form of government? or their quaint rhaematographic alphabet? Will

they now as successfully resist every influence of the intruding European civilization? They are now remarkable by their indifference in religious matters and sceptical turn of mind. (*Huc* "Voyage dans le Thibet.")

The main character of the *European* genius is its native and infinite perfectibility and progressive development; many a time overshadowed by the densest clouds of superstition, false doctrines, and mock sciences, it rose from that degrading state with a renovated force, tore to pieces its shackles, raised itself up to the comprehension of the divine truths of the gospel, learned to cherish and reverence Christianity purified from the dross and corruption with which ages of darkness and prejudiced speculation have disfigured it, discovered sundry laws of nature, and turning them to account, made the steam work, the electricity speak, and the sunbeam draw. But not all European nations are making equal progress in the development of their mental powers. Some are belated; as some of the Slavonian nations, to whom the rise, as well as the fall of the Mongolian empire proved equally prejudicious, and who adopted the Byzantine form of Christianity; whereas some have retrograded, as the Italians and Spaniards.

The genius of the *Spaniard* is ardent, and vigorous. Their majestic language, lively imagination, and the air of romance which they throw over every action, and infuse into every feeling—all combine to delude us, and to impose upon the judgment. The country of Caballeros is a weary land—her elevated central plains, storm-blown and frost-bitten in winter, arid and calcinated in summer, are cheerless. No trees break the blasts, no shade refreshes the eye, no song-

bird the ear. This part of middle Spain was always and will be an undisputed heritage of the wild bee, the locust, and the vulture. Few and far between are the hamlets. The roads are in these steppes ill-appointed, deficient in everything but danger and discomfort; lofty, rugged, and impracticable the Sierras, the fastness of men indomitable as themselves. But on the outskirts, in the east and south, lie the paradises of Spain, vegas of everlasting spring and golden fruits. Spain is local and incohesive, every province differing in language, costume and manner; each district only interested for itself. Only in their religion, consisting of practical Marianism and revived Paganism, all are united. Every Spaniard is priding himself of being a *Cristiano viejo*. Spain, when her sword was broken, retired in sullen pride into herself. Hermetically sealed in her self-imposed ignorance—she knew nothing of disunions, which elsewhere shook the film from men's eyes. Innovations of the Reformation were there kept down by the Holy Inquisition. Their ideas, on all subjects on which they have ideas, are stereotyped. They are petrified in obstinate prejudices; even now labour seems to be regarded as a humiliation. The Moors on quitting their country left them their sports, their oriental poetry, their indifference for the future, and their common sayings.

The true national spirit—*Espanolismo*—is far from being extinct. He who wishes to be acquainted, says *Mr. Barrow* ("The Bible in Spain"), with the genuine Spaniard, must seek him not in seaports and large towns, but in lone and remote villages. There he will find all that gravity of deportment and chivalry of disposition, which *Cervantes* is said to have sneered

away; and there he will hear in every day conversation those grandiose expressions, which when met with in the romances of chivalry are scoffed at as ridiculous exaggerations.

Spain has produced many dramatical poets and men very acute in theological disquisitions; their theologians enjoyed great authority in the council of Trent. They are now not over rich in the knowledge derived from books, but have fresh faculties, not tired out by too much exertion; they have a great deal of mother wit, which is generally obliterated in over-civilized nations; a vivid sense of every thing that is beautiful and noble, a ready though not very subtle wit, a lively imagination, and a sound judgment, which with them is developed and improved earlier, and only associating with men rendered wise by experience. Generally, Spaniards are learning more by experience than through the books, but have retained more of the freshness of mind and susceptibility of intellect, which is not overloaded by a vast quantity of chequered knowledge and jarring arguments. A Spaniard has a clear intellectual vision, and is more interested in things that came to his knowledge. You never see among them the malady of more refined nations — loathsomeness, squeamishness and indifference, which follow satiety of mind as well as that of body. Gallicia has the reputation of being the Bœotia of Spain.

"The Spanish character (says one of our best modern historians), with relation to public affairs, is distinguished by inordinate pride and arrogance. Dilatory and improvident, the individual as well as the mass, all possess an absurd confidence, that everything is practicable which their heated imaginations suggest;

once excited, they can see no difficulty in the execution of a project; and the obstacles they encounter are attributed to treachery; hence the sudden murder of so many virtuous men at the commencement of this commotion. Kind and warm in his attachments, but bitter in his anger, the Spaniard is patient under privations, firm in bodily suffering, prone to sudden passion, vindictive, bloody, remembering insult longer than injury, and cruel in his revenge. With a strong natural perception of what is noble, his promise is lofty; but as he invariably permits his passions to get the mastery of his reason, his performance is mean. In the progress of this war, the tenacity of vengeance peculiar to the nation supplied the want of cool, persevering intrepidity; but it was a poor substitute for that essential quality, and led rather to deeds of craft and cruelty than to daring acts of patriotism.—(*Napier*, "Peninsular War.")

Portuguese are like the Italians—a degenerated nation. You see among them the same absence of high principles, the same languishing of intellect, the same decay of loftier powers and energies which dignify men. Though the countrymen of *Camoens* want not the natural tenderness and natural movements of heart, they have, however, no enthusiasm—no devoted admiration for objects not connected with daily necessities of life, or the low gratification of sense. Not only has the spirit of chivalry departed from these mountains, where it once was glowing, but its marvellous and golden tales are neglected or forgotten. They appear scarcely acquainted with a few mighty names capable to lend them inspiration, which might supply the place of contemporary genius. Of rich stores of

poetry and romance, which they might enjoy from the neighbouring country and almost similar language of Spain, they are for the most part unconscious.

Italians have vivid impressions, which they express with unexpected calmness; but one must not mistake them for volcanos covered with snow. There is no other nation in Europe so unlike its ancestors; so decayed, degenerated, unmanned, and emasculated, as the Italians of our days. Timidity has ceased to be shameful—cowardice is not despised. They have vices belonging to timid dispositions, fraud and hypocrisy; and regard with lenity those crimes which require cunning, quick observation, knowledge of human nature, and self-command. Military courage they neither possess nor value; but a young highwayman, when successful, is with them a hero, though he is weltering in innocent blood; when entrapped, he excites universal sympathy, and is spoken of with endearment as a "poverino."

You see in Italy no ambition, no pride, no violent desire of distinction or wealth, no panting after fame, or at least notoriety, or reputation, no high aspirations. All nobility of thought is there withered or shrivelled up. They seem to have smothered in their breast all human passions, except *hatred*, which after love is their only cherished and fostered passion; and the only thing they are longing for is the "dolce far niente," and *revenge*. This last is corroding the ulcerated heart of an Italian, yet every look is a cordial smile, every gesture a familiar caress ; he never excites the suspicion of his adversary by petty provocations or threats. His purpose is disclosed only when it is accomplished. His face is unruffled, his speech is courteous, till vigilance is laid asleep, till a

vital point is exposed, till a sure aim is taken—and then he strikes, for the first and last time.

They have now no poet, no historian, no painter, no sculptor; even music is decaying; in place of a guitar and a spirit-stirring song, which used to enliven the streets, you are now pested by mistuned organ-grinders. Nobody sends now for an architect to the country of *Michael Angelo* and *Palladio*, and the Muscovites are casting bronzed horses for the decoration of Naples. Most of their modern writers strike us with their penury of thought, want of force and exactness, looseness of reasoning, and the most annoying copiousness, or rather wordiness and vacuity of style. *Voltaire* could not help expressing his contempt for the Italian literature.

It was supposed that despotism, both military and ecclesiastical, under which they have groaned for three centuries, had the effect of suppressing every noble aspiration and feeling of their mind, every spark of their genius; but the memorable year of 1848, when they confounded their remembrances with their hopes, yet were allowed to enjoy the full liberty of thought and action, goes to prove, that they are now incapable of producing such men as *Machiavelli* or *Savonarola*. Their provisional government and free parliaments had but very few and but second-rate capacities to boast of; the most conspicuous of their political men, as *Gioberti*, *Mazzini*, *Guerrazzi*, *Montanelli*, showed more oratorical talents than political wisdom. Among twenty-two millions of men, not one captain, not one practical statesman occurred. In politics they were bunglers, displayed a fabulous shortsightedness, and gave utterance to the most childish imaginings.*

* That there are exceptions to this general delineation it is hardly necessary to remind our readers. The author had occasion to get

How can we account for this state of Italian mind? It is not the superstition, not the influence of very numerous priests; for three centuries ago these influences were more powerful, and yet Italy then was the soul of Europe. Is it a revolution of commerce? new roads to East India? But the world was once conquered by Italians, when commerce was in the hands of Carthaginians. I am not in mood now to grapple with that question, or to trouble myself with its solution, but should be inclined to put it, at least in part, on the score of their climate, whose enervating influence is highly underrated in our days.

The *French* possess a great quickness of perception and sprightliness of fancy; are ingenious, as to seem ever inconsistent; understand everything in a flash; never get beyond their depth, conceive better than they combine. Playing over the mere surface of the mind, they like to relieve the subtleties of the logic by a quibble, and to illuminate by flashes of wit the metaphysical abysses which they sometimes choose to tread. They have an unpoetical mind, and a great aptitude to abstruse mathematical investigations; a great love of symmetry, which gives such excellence to the composition and style of their prose writings. They have a keen and elegant wit, a great aptness for ridiculing, and an anxious fear of being ridiculed;

acquainted with highly respectable Italian gentlemen from different provinces, whose manly character, openness, vast native understanding, and varied information, would command the highest esteem and admiration in any country of Europe; but, unhappily for that nation, these are but exceptions. When *Radetzky* lay shut up in his four fortresses, and the Piedmontese army was marching towards Mincio, a person belonging to the provisional government of Lombardy, though in a position to know better, was heard to say, "I wonder what the Piedmontese came for into Lombardy!"

are quick in perceiving the ridiculous side of every occurrence, though a laugh raised at the cost even of the noblest and the most sacred object, is fatal to its success. Their countenances indicate that their mental powers were developed in conversation rather than in deep thinking or moody pondering. No deep furrows left by meditations, no melancholy eye beaming with intelligence, and betokening the fatigues of the mind long harassed with doubts and misgivings. Their mind displays the roundness and polish of pebbles borne along with the current of life. They give an immediate utterance to every feeling, to every thought, that starts up in their mind. A Frenchman, even the most reflective, reflects aloud; their meditative powers are all vocable.

"A superior man," observes *Mrs. Gore*, "does not imply in France a man too clever for ordinary purposes, who distinguishes himself by got-up speeches in Parliament, or articles in some quarterly review; but one who is ever ready to enlighten his associates by the exercise of his colloquial powers, one who does not hold his ideas too sacred to be communicated, one who is prompt to aid in the circulation of the current coin of wisdom, without resting satisfied that in his sullen treasury is hoarded the ingots of knowledge. It means a man who is a charming companion, a man who talks, as *Montaigne* writes; a man of whose fluent and easy philosophy one is never weary."

The French have eminent colloquial powers, a pleasing and lively conversation, and the sixth sense, peculiar to them, called *tact*, consisting in not swimming beyond one's depth, and not exerting one's self to talk too well.

There is, however, a great change going on among

the French in manners, feelings, as well as in the bias of their mind. "There is no doubt," said *Chateaubriand*, in the year 1814, "that we are now less frivolous, more natural, more plain; that now everybody has his own way, and is not so exactly like others. Our youth, formed in the camp or in solitude, are more manly and independent than was formerly the case. Religion, with those who stick to it, is no more a mere habit, but the result of a strong conviction; the moral feeling, if not smothered in the heart, is not the mere produce of home training, but the fruit of an enlightened reason. Great things had occupied the mind of our people; the whole world was displaying itself before our eyes. Frenchmen are more manly now than thirty or forty years ago. How easily one could have got reputation in literature, politics, or in the military career! What strange titles to fame, and how mean, to say no more, would those celebrated men appear to us now!"

In France, there are within its political limits six different languages spoken, and as many different nationalities; Breton, Basque, Catalan, Flemish, German, and Gallic, exhibiting great shades in the cast of their intellectual powers. The province of Limoge has been esteemed the Thebes of France, and its natives, as if born in a grosser air, are supposed peculiarly dull and liable to imposition. There is, besides, a remarkable difference in point of mental qualities existing between the northern and southern parts of France: the Provençal and the Gascon are endowed with a more lively fancy than the French on the north of the Loire. The Gascons inhabiting the valley of the Garonne, the gayest people in France, against whom so many of the proverbial witticisms of their

fellow-countrymen are directed, were formerly famous for bragging; a Gascon lie used to be something very peculiar. The Frenchman of the south, with talent, energy and vivacity, is deficient in the power of close reasoning, and no less so in the higher inventive faculties. In science, literature, in the arts, his inferiority is beyond any doubt. With the exception of *Montaigne* and *Montesquieu*, both Gascons, and *Pascal*, an Auvergnat, there is scarcely one more of those great and truly original writers, who was born in the southern half of France. *Crebillon* the younger used to estimate beforehand the probable excellence of a poem, by the geographical position of a poet's birthplace. "*Crebillon*," says *Mercier*, "was in the habit of opening his door every morning to a number of versifiers and beginners in authorship. He said to me one day—'Stay with me till a quarter to one; that is the time when the poets bring me their manuscripts.' I sat down—the bell rang: *Crebillon* opened it. Enter an author, with an air of ease and vivacity; he presents himself with some grace, talks well; he takes a chair, and draws the manuscript from his pocket. Conversation begins, and our author says some good things. 'What country do you come from?' asked *Crebillon*. 'From the neighbourhood of Toulouse,' replied the author. 'Good: leave your manuscript; send or come to-morrow, and the approbation will be regularly entered.' When this writer was gone, *Crebillon*, holding the manuscript in his hand, said to me, 'I do not know what there is inside this: you have heard the young man; he talks readily, and has wit. Will you allow me to bet you that his work is without rhyme or reason?' 'Why so hasty a judgment?' 'You shall know. Let us read it together.' In fact,

the piece presented for the exercise of *Crebillon's* censorship had not common sense. The bell rings again; another author enters. He stops at the door; he does not know how to come in, or to talk, or to sit down; he moves as if he was afraid to bend his joints; he scarcely escapes upsetting the censor's breakfast-table. It is quite a science to get him to take a chair; he tries to speak, and only stammers; he answers our questions at random. After looking five minutes at his pocket, swollen with his manuscript, he draws it out, awkwardly lets his hat and cane fall in presenting it; looks about for his umbrella, as if he thought it was stolen; sticks the point of his sword into my leg by a clumsy movement, and at last succeeds in saying, 'I beg you to be speedy, sir, for I have been told that you are very obliging.' *Crebillon* takes the packet with his usual politeness, puts its author at his ease as much as possible, and makes the same inquiry. 'I come from the neighbourhood of Rouen.' 'Good; in three days I shall have approved your manuscript.' He leads him out, and assists him to find his umbrella. The door seems too small for the exit of the poet, for he sways to the left, makes a false step on the landing-place, and tumbles down stairs, after pushing back his censor with his hand, from excess of Norman politeness. 'What a brute!' said I; 'and that animal writes!' 'Well,' says *Crebillon*, 'you have seen him, you have heard him, or rather, have not heard him; will you take my bet that his work is not without merit?' 'Then you know him?' 'No more than the other; I never saw him before; let us read.' We did so; the production of the clumsy Norman had ideas, style; in short, it was a very respectable performance.' 'Many years'

experience,' said *Crebillon*, 'has shown me that out of twenty authors from the south of France, nineteen are detestable, while out of the same number from the north, half at least have the germ of talent, and are capable of great things. The worst possible verses are made between Bordeaux and Nismes; that is the latitude of bad poets. All these writers have in general nothing but wind in their heads; while those of the north have good sense and natural talents, which only wants cultivation.' I have had many occasions to apply *Crebillon's* observation," says *Mercier*, "and have rarely found it fail. *Southern heads—making allowance for exceptions—seem to me unfit for composition; they want logic.*"

In speaking of the intellectual compass and capacities of *Germans*, we are apt to be led into error, and get our judgment biassed by the dazzling appearance of their literature, astounding by the vast number of its productions, and the fathomless depth of its philosophical and antiquarian disquisitions, as endless as a spider's thread, and of no substance or profit. It is not in vain that they have invented typography, for they make a large and extensive use of it, even under the control of a board of censure. They have expended an immense thought upon questions obviously beyond the reach of our understanding, and are capable of supplying the whole world with metaphysical trash. *Hegel* has solaced his countrymen by proclaiming that Europe—perhaps rewarding their political insignificance—has left them the vocation of exclusive monopoly for the cultivation of metaphysics, and guarding the holy fire—as the Eumolpus were the sole guardians of the Eleusinian mysteries in Athens—a statement which no nation in Europe is inclined to gainsay.

Germans have not the quick apprehension of the French, nor the sterling practical sense of the English, but are unwearied and patient in their speculations and disquisitions. They like to scrutinize closely the mysterious phenomena of the mind, and it is the only European nation whose chequered philosophy has a semblance with poetry, and whose poetry exhibits many features of their dreamy philosophy. They are given to boring in books. Their cumbrous minds have a great bent for all that is obscure, mystical, ambiguous, and vapoury; they are long-winded and prone to begin with the deluge, if not from the creation of the world. Their copiousness, however, serves to darken, not to illustrate. At ease, and even revelling in the spiritual world, they are very uncouth in every-day life.* It is but several years ago that they began to think seriously about turning to account and popularizing their hoarded knowledge and cumbrous erudition, and tried to adapt it to some practical scope. The resurrection of the scholastic philosophy, mysticism, and sophistry, that universal tendency to whatever is most remote from human interest and comprehension, which *Goethe* and *John Miller*, their greatest poet and their greatest historian, highly deprecated, has unmanned the spirit of Germans, and rendered them a useless member in the council of nations. In the moment of a transient liberty, which they owed to chance, in the memorable year 1848, the Diet of Frankfort, instead of consolidating the young liberties of Germany, cast greedy looks round the neighbouring nations, wanted to despoil

*"Zu allen Zeiten waren die Deutchen in praktischem Leben unbehulflicher als andere Nationen, aber einheimischer in der inneren Welt."—*Mentzel,* Die Deutsche Literatur, t. i. p. 22.

Dannemarck of one of her most valuable provinces. The town of Posen, with one half of that duchy, the cradle of the ancient Polish kingdom, was by them voted down to be a German town and country, because there happened to settle many Jews speaking broken German. The marvellous town of Venice, metropolis of a glorious and interesting Italian republic, was claimed by the diet as a German seaport. The Welsh Tyrol, though Italian in language, manners, and feelings, was to be considered as a German province; but they had not the spirit to lay equally plausible claims to Alsatia, Livonia, as well as to several counties of the United States, because the French Republic, the Emperor Nicholas, and Uncle Sam, might perchance not be inclined to verify their nice metaphysical deductions with a patience required for their comprehension. They had, besides, the depressing mortification of having carried about an imperial crown, without finding a candidate that would condescend to take it. Such was the political wisdom of those erudite philologers, such the justice of those profound metaphysicians, who, soaring in the highest ranges of thought in search of truth, and of the highest principles of moral philosophy, return from those lofty haunts as narrow-minded, with passions as mean and selfish as men are by them supposed to be, when standing on the level ground of plain common sense. They showed that even when quite free, they are neither inspired by the spirit of the gospel, nor with the worldly wisdom of practical statesmen. Is it, then, a wonder that Germany is "but an ethnographical expression?"

However, turning with disgust from their political career, we are not inclined to deny that by their

unwearied industry, profound research, their boldness, sagacity, and occasional impartiality in historical criticism, by their universal command of the literature of all ages and all countries, and by their philosophical tone of thought, they may have contributed to the rapid progress of the European genius.

The northern Germans, Protestants, have a more lively fancy, more wit and humour; the southern Roman catholics have more feeling, more gravity, and more fiery passions. The former have more inclination to speculative philosophy, and comical poetry; the latter to philosophy of nature and poetry of the heart.

Englishmen.—This is a race of men guided by religious and moral principles, elevated by the spirit of free institutions, whose faculties of conception and of action equally balanced render it singularly adapted to mechanical inventions. There is no denying that to the inventive genius of her sons, England owes a great part of the foundation of her commercial greatness. In our country the steam-sinewed giant is toiling with the steadiness and silent perseverance of the powers of nature.

The *English* character exhibits the high combination of the spirit of chivalry, blended with the mild spirit of Christianity; though twice denationalized, the English came, however, in moral and mental points, up to that perfection which men seem to have been destined to. There is no deficiency nor exuberance, either in mental powers or moral feelings, which might have prevented them from attaining that greatness or happiness which mankind is capable of; for it cannot be denied, that on the whole there is now more sound religion, social happiness, political freedom, and

material prosperity in England, than in any nation in the world, and that there is no other country where so many are and believe themselves happy, and enjoy all the blessings and comforts of life. It is there that we see the Norman tempered by the Saxon, the fire of conquest softened by integrity, and a serene, though flexible habit of thought; it is in England that we find patient fortitude, founded on religious and moral principles; energy, the fruit of free institutions; unbounded credit, the consequence of the strict maintenance of public faith, and wealth, the effect of industry and commercial enterprise.

The stout and honest heart of Old England, the steady, stalwart character of Anglo-Saxons, the high chivalrous spirit of Normans, the deeply-rooted respect for the law, the manly self-reliance, the sturdy sense of independence, unwearied perseverance, robust and athletic endurance, inflexible constancy, stern resolution, active and stirring spirit, starting forward in the animating pursuit of the better, haughty consciousness of liberty, obstinate contempt of tyranny and danger, high-sense of self-respect, and a vivid, deep, and earnest religious feeling, are sterling qualities with which they have achieved their greatness.

An English officer surrounded with the comforts of life, rushes out of his carpeted saloon to fight with a barbarous nation, ignorant of the laws that regulate the warfare of Christian and civilized nations, and cheerfully undergoes the greatest hardships, bivouacking in the midst of tempest, moving alternately under the hottest sun and the wildest tornadoes, now scorched with heat more like the blast from a furnace, and then drenched with rain coming down in sheets, and every day exposed to wounds, and in hazard of

death, or the horrors of a captivity worse than death. A midshipman on board the *Abergavenny*, was appointed to guard the spirit-room, to prevent the crew from dying in a state of intoxication. "Give us some grog," exclaimed the sailors; "it will be all one an hour hence!" "I know we must die," replied the young officer, "*but let us die like men!*" and armed with a brace of pistols, he kept his post even while the ship was sinking. With men of such a frame of mind there is no wonder that England is flourishing.

Mont Blanc presents itself in all its grandeur and brilliancy, not going up to Chamounix, but falling back till Dauphine. In sketching a giant, one must not gaze at him too closely, nor scrutinize his features through a microscope; but there is a certain distance, from which you may well ascertain and rightly appreciate his greatness. Such a giant is the English nation. The English exhibit in our days the sterling and active virtues of ancient Romans, and bear to them a great resemblance in many other respects. There is the same severity of education, and great respect paid to parents, the same lack of vocation and talents for the fine arts; only Romans had robbed Greece of its statues, whereas Englishmen are buying them up from Italians. There is the same magnificence and finish in public buildings. The Romans built aqueducts and roads; the English, canals, iron-railroads, suspension and tubular bridges. Englishmen scorn every enthusiasm, rightly judging, that it is short-lived; but rather exclaim, "Britons, be bricks!" that is, be square and lay fast, as square stones do; don't roll round like a ball, and don't fly up like balloons. The English have equally

healthy minds, and, like the Romans, are fond of dangerous sports, which keep up the strength and spirit of the nation. The Romans at first established an aristocratical monarchy, which dwindled away into an aristocratical republic. The English had also an aristocratical monarchy, which became now a mixed government, with aristocratical and democratical elements, with a prevailing aristocratical feeling, aristocratical sympathy and spirit, which is pervading the whole nation. The king is the head of the English church, and the younger sons of the English nobility devote themselves to the church; hence the English church is connected with aristocracy, and is under its immediate influence, just as it was in ancient Rome. They resemble Romans in their love of country life, and their esteem of agricultural pursuits. And as the Romans covered the whole of Italy with their villas, so you see in England thousands of splendid castles, manor-houses, mansions and parks, with which even their great cities are surrounded and adorned. But Englishmen have happily evaded an exclusive aristocracy of old Venice, as well as the levelling democracy of modern France, which are but one remove from despotism.

The Romans received their law of ten tables from Greece, and their pretors and civilians developed and built upon it the huge superstructure of Roman law. Britons obtained the principles of their common law from Anglo-Saxons, of *Hengist* and *Horsa*, who brought it over in their small crafts, little thinking that their legislature, which was in them like second nature, which they followed and obeyed quite unconsciously, will be the foundation of civil law in all countries inhabited by the Anglo-Saxon race, and that their boorish

jury will be imitated by the most civilized nations, and will be the most cherished inheritance of their progeny. The English extended these few and simple principles of law, partly by precedents, interpretation of the judges, and partly by statute law, the only written law existing in England. The English law is, like the Roman, a wonderful chaos; they stick anxiously to the letter and form of their law, as did the Romans, who put such great stress on their forms.

The Romans never thought of reducing into a system, squeezing into one codex, their laws, as long as the freedom of their aristocracy flourished; their laws were preserved untouched till the growth of the despotical authority of imperators. The feelings of the bar, the opinion and interest of civilians, as well as the leanings of the people, are contrary to the codification of the English common law.* The principle of the sacredness of property, the extreme veneration of its rights, form the basis of the whole English system, and pervade all English usages and modes of thinking.

* Why the English appear so averse and reluctant to the codification of their common law, is a very interesting and nice legal question, upon which it is impossible for us to expatiate in this place; we only remark, that a system of laws gets in time interwoven with the habits of the people, and that the law existing is a kind of property with a free people. The public have a vested right in the enforcement of the law as it stands, and are entitled to interpret it in their own favour. There are in it precedents favourable to liberty. The whole of society is entangled with these laws into an inextricable knot. To deprive the nation of the whole structure and foundation, upon which is based personal security as well as that of their property, on the plea of giving them a systematical codex, were too much even for the omnipotence of parliament:

The English constitution, raised by the accumulated wisdom of many centuries, developed by *revolution* and *accession*, cemented by a great profusion of blood, has settled the long and bloody contest of Roundhead and Cavalier, Whig and Tory, the prerogatives of the Crown, and the privileges and liberties of the people, and hushed religious quarrels; a constitution which, establishing a mixed government, has secured the peace, happiness, and liberty of so many generations; a constitution, under the benefit of which the English have grown to a great eminence amongst nations, under whose protection you see a respected and powerful aristocracy and a free people, liberty of the press and religion, and an established church; that constitution, the most beautiful fabric of government on earth, is the most noble and gigantic monument of the English genius. Its main principles are not formally and exactly set forth in a single written instrument, but are engraven on the hearts of Englishmen. Under its protection, the English have extended their sway in five parts of the world; in climates where whisky is freezing, and where they may boil their pudding

however, in England the obnoxious laws, or some part of them, are modified or softened down by declaration, which it receives in courts, in compliance with the power of opinion, till it falls in desuetude, and finally gets repealed. Besides, we know that in a law there are two distinct circumstances: the intention of the legislator, and the meaning of the words in which the law is embodied. In putting the law into system, and compressing it into a codex, both may be altered unconsciously, inverting the whole of national laws; and this is the reason that all free nations are not very anxious and willing to put in order—as it is generally called and believed—their laws, and never allow to stem their natural development, till they are compelled, by a despotical power, as was the case in ancient Rome, in Poland and in France.

exposing it to the rays of the sun; in countries, with eternally unclouded sky, and where the sun disappears for three months. They dominate from Downing-street several versicoloured nations, and are nowhere subject to a foreign monarch; even at St. Petersburgh, the English factor enjoys privileges amounting to absolute independence from local authorities.

Having undisputed supremacy at sea, the English are neighbours of all nations in the world. They have surrounded with their military stations Europe from the Ionian Islands to Heligoland, as well as Africa, Asia, and America. The whole of East India, with one and a half million of square miles, and hundred and fifty millions of population, with its islands, the sources, as well as the issues of Indus and Ganges, the mountains and the plateaux of Himalaya, is under the British sway. They possess the whole country, which Bacchus only ran over, of which Alexander dreamed, and which the Romans never approached. They have got seventeen royal families, descendants of Great Mogul and *Tippoo Saib* to pay, to whom they distribute ten millions of rupees yearly. Ten other monarchs, among whom is *His Highness the Geakwar*, having six millions of subjects, are protected by English troops. Their government machinery is every day more simple, more just, and more beneficial for the natives; there are day-schools, infant-schools, Sanscrit colleges, where they may learn the English and Hindostani. Calcutta, with many palaces and half a million of inhabitants, is standing on ground where a hundred years ago only jungles existed; and if we recollect the rapines and tyranny which the Indians suffered from their native or Mahomedan princes, we must bless the English government; for there are Christian nations

that may be jealous of the happiness enjoyed on the banks of Indus and Ganges by the worshippers of Shiva and Juggernaut. Such a vast country is governed, protected, and defended by a handful of men, with an army not greater than that of Alexander by Granicus. Besides, there happen things impossible or unheard of in our Europe, except in the ancient history or the chronicles of middle ages. The Indians erected at Benares a temple to *Warren Hastings*. *Captain Light* marries the daughter of the King Quedah, and sells to England his dowry, the island of Poolo-Penang, from where the English send to China edible birds' nests. *Mr. Brooke*, who, like a new Prometheus, lit up in the heart of savages the fire of humanity, has founded by his personal means and exertions a little sovereignty, *Surawak*, on the coast of Borneo, an island inhabited by the fiercest of the Orang-Outang race, and men dwelling in trees. The large and thriving town, *Singapore*, a second out-port of this vast oceanic region, the great emporium of the trade between China and India, is not yet fifty years old. The English were the first to open the gates to the *Celestial Empire*. Australia seems to be the cradle of a new English empire, and we have seen in London plans of cities to be raised in New Zealand.

All this dazzling greatness, however, is but a dawn of a still brighter futurity. The abolition of the monopoly of the East India Company forms a new and important era for East India, as the abolition of slave trade for African nations, and the opening of China for two hundred millions of Chinese,—these are events but of yesterday. Fortune has got a great deal more in store for the English nation; but when these seeds will bring forth a tree, and this gigantic tree will

bear its golden fruits, then will be a proper time for a *Camoens*, who will sing in bright strains the great achievements of Britons; for the English, after having exhibited great energy, industry, and a stout heart for many centuries, and spread their dominion over many nations, have stamped their character on our century, and given a sufficient guarantee that their beneficial influence over mankind will last for ages.

In their intellectual attainments they display that happy measure which, far from being mediocrity, is apt to render successful all their efforts in the highest ranges of literature and science. They have *Shakespeare*, *Milton*, and *Newton* to boast of. Their fancy is never gilding the stern realities of human life; they smile at enthusiasm as something childish, put no confidence in the steadiness of enthusiastic flights, and like to concentrate themselves into a stern gravity.* Though subtlety is not their characteristic, they are, however, keen observers. Endowed with a sturdy sagacity, patiently reflecting, cautiously concluding, scorning idle show, rejecting petty bustle, acting without enthusiasm, but with constant energy in their favourite pursuit of the useful, they accomplish so much because they imagine so little. Direct and practical tendency, distinct purpose, and mental independence, are apparent in their literary and scientific pursuits; and if sometimes a soaring imagination

* "Anglis est plurimum gravis animus et in se velut ad consilium seductus; se ipsos et suæ gentis mores eximie mirantur: dum salutant aut scribunt, descendere ad verba imaginariæ servitutis, quæ istorum sæculorum blandities invenit, nisi forte externis moribus imbuti, non sustinent. Populus rei maritimæ studiosus, neque aliud tantæ insulæ validius munimentum, quam tot nautarum sedulitas."—*Jo. Barclai.*

opens a new field for their enterprise, they follow the opened road with eminently practical conduct and sagacity. They like to think for themselves, and scorn to turn imitators. The French literature, though lying at their very door, has no influence over their minds; but some time ago, the extravagant admiration of the few rendered the drowsy German philosophy and, somewhat late, the whole German literature, recommended by an affected admiration of *Shakespeare*,* very fashionable in England; and it was to be feared that it might exert its baneful influence on the healthy mind of the English, and their literature; but ere long the artificially created sensation subsided, the enthusiasm cooled down, as it was on a closer examination discovered that the Germans have but few authors among a host of scribblers and bookmakers; that their literature, apparently so rich, is, in fact, like the Arabian of *Arun-al-Rashid*, carried about on the back of camels—is very poor, deficient, and in want of masculine character, and that it is mostly composed of idle speculations, trivial research, and spurious enthusiasm.

In general there is something in the English mind that neutralizes and dissolves everything prejudicial in their laws, religious establishments, and political institutions; every fault which the lapse of time has occasioned or displayed, every anomaly of their legislature, every deviation in their literature, is gradually and insensibly modified, set to right, adjusted, and accommodated to the alteration of circumstances, and turned to the advantage of society. All errors or

* They found beauties in the trash foisted in by the players, and discovered a profound meaning in the corruptions of his text.

antiquated prejudices, all novelties running counter to the general wish and feeling, give a way to the force of truth, to the power of common sense, sound judgment and humanity, which distinguishes the English nation, and all this without any violent commotion, sweeping reform, sudden jerks and starts, without any new fangling and display of headstrong zeal, whereas in other countries you may see even the best laws soon deteriorating and becoming the bane and curse of the nation.*

* Christianity, for instance, is parcel of the law of England, and therefore "to impeach the established faith, or to endeavour to unsettle the belief of others," is a misdemeanor at common law, and subjects the offender, at the discretion of the court, to fine, imprisonment, and infamous corporal punishment. By the 9 and 10 William III. cap. 32, whoever, being educated a Christian, shall, by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, deny any of the persons of the Holy Trinity to be God, or deny the Christian religion to be true, or the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be of divine authority, shall, for the first offence, be incapable of holding any official place or trust, civil or military, and for the second be imprisoned for three years, and be incapable of suing in any court of law or equity, or of accepting any gift or legacy. Notwithstanding, the publisher of "Strauss" has not been punished, though a work amenable to the law—and, what is more, condemned by public opinion, to which the English justly leave the repression of infidelity.

The English consider the publication of the debates in the House of Commons—which in hundreds of thousands of reports fly through the civilized world—as one of their most important concerns; but this practice is not merely unprotected by law, but it is illegal, and a contempt of the House of Commons.

The English common-law judges laid down certain rules respecting property and contracts, against which common sense revolted. The clerical chancellors, unable to control the common-law courts, forbade all persons to have recourse to them for these purposes; hence it came that nearly all the property of England has two different owners—a legal owner and an equitable owner. What would

It has been observed that of the Englishmen living in East India, those of the north of Benares have more wit than those settled at Bengal.*

The *Welsh*, finally united with England in the reign of Henry VIII., is a Celtic or Gallic nation, which were known under the name of Kymrs, and have the same relation to the Gallic of Scotland and Ire of Ireland, as the Dutch to the Germans. Without the energy and industry of Englishmen, still less of the Irish sensibility, they are vegetating unknown between these two nations; but they have conserved the simplicity of mountaineers and shepherds, and are neither so churlish nor so avaricious as the Swiss. The men are apt to be violent; the women have the reputation for rosy lips and beauty. It is a common saying, that a Welshman keeps nothing till he has lost it. They have great talent for poetry and music; their tunes and melodies are as sweet as those of Scotland and Ireland, and the great Welsh harp is as often to be seen in the houses of Welshmen, as the small harp in Ireland and the bagpipe in Scotland. To this day they play the harp and sing; every year there is a Bard meeting. Taffy believes in sorcery and second-sight, and is very fond of genealogy; hence comes the saying, "As long as a Welsh pedigree," and a Welsh

be the lot of landed proprietors in any other country under similar legal circumstances, it is not difficult to imagine, as we may see something of that kind in Sicily.

* Il y a de braves gens et d'aimables gens chez ces Anglais du nord de l'Inde au nord de Benares ; au Bengale, je ne sais pourquoi, mais ce n'est pas absolument de même. Il y a moins de cordialité et moins d'esprit. La différence est proverbiale dans l'Inde, et pour être proverbiale elle n'est pas moins vrai.—*Jaquemont, Correspondance pendant son Voyage dans l'Inde.*

cousin. In point of mental abilities they, like all nations of Celtic extraction, have a more lively fancy than powers of judgment or reasoning.

The Celts are predominating nationality in *Ireland;* there are, besides, degenerate English, who turned Celts, English by blood, English by birth, and Scots; they speak bad English, called *brogue*, except in the western part of Ireland, where they have retained the Celtic. The Irish are a very light-hearted, fanciful, and impressionable people. They are easily moved to tears or to laughter, to fury or to love. They can utter cries of delight at the sight of a splendid conflagration which is consuming their dwellings. Quickness of intellect is generally admitted to distinguish the mass of Irishmen. They seem to possess more lively imagination, more buoyancy of wit, more vivacity and humour, than their neighbours of Scotland and England, and hence more aptitude to poetry and music. Their imagination, however, is always stronger than any other of their intellectual faculties. Luxuriance of language and too copious use of ornament distinguish their authors and orators, whose exuberance of imagination sometimes places them in the predicament of their honest countryman, who complained of being run away with by his legs. It is stated that plain common sense is not of daily occurrence in the country of shillelah. "By Gush! Minister would take more sense to Ireland than has been talked there since the rebellion, for common sense is a word that don't grow like Jacob's ladder in them diggins, I guess. It is about as stunted as Gineral Nichodemus Ott's corn was," says the spirited author of "The Attaché." The extreme diversity of shades in Irish character (says Thomas Colley Grattan,

in his sketches of the Irish fools) is not more remarkable than the wild harmony with which they blend together. Almost every individual is made up of contradictions, or at least of contrast. The joy of an Irishman has always a dash of melancholy in it, and there is a rainbow even in his most clouded sky. Our fools perpetually say the shrewdest things, our wise men constantly the most foolish.

Under *Scottish* heavens, whose "deep fermenting tempests are brewed in grim evening;" under Scotland's storm-loving, mist-enamoured sun; in a country indented by winding estuaries, deep inlets of the ocean, and fringed by innumerable islands; where you see mountain ranges rising into peaks of granite, or descending into precipices of gneiss; which embosom limpid lakes or give birth in their career to a thundering cataract; where you see lavas of trap and granite containing precious gems and ores; where you may see buried forests, basaltic caves, columnar sea-cliffs stretching out their Doric colonnades, or shooting forth their broken shafts and the shattered polygones; where you may see the parallel roads of Glenroy, the thirty vitrified forts, the joyous moors; a country where you see clouds of an ephemeral fly cover the angler with their thrown off filmy skins, limbs, and eyes; where the bird-catchers, darting as spiders from the top of the wall, are suspended over the steepest and loftiest cliffs; a country whose heathers, nooks, lochs, glens, woods, and cloud-capped and eagle-breeding mountains live in our mind when once seen, is inhabited by two nations—the Scotch *Highlanders*, and *Lowlanders*, called by the former *Cruitnich*. The Highlanders have retained their old Celtic language, and partly their picturesque costume and clanish

spirit; the Lowlanders are a nation coalesced from Danes and Anglo-Saxons, and have the language, manners, as well as the glorious name of Britons in common with the English. There is in the Scotch character a sort of shrewd simplicity, a quaint mixture of gentleness and daring, of warmth of heart and reserve of manner. They are an intelligent, serious, calculating, crafty, sober, industrious, and persevering people. In self-command, in forethought, in all qualities of mind which conduce to success in life, the Scots have never been surpassed. They display a cautious, wary, distrustful nature, which they call sound and safe judgment, and at the same time a natural impetuosity of intellect, which they sometimes claim and sometimes are upbraided with. They have an emimently logical intellect, are given to scrutinising and methaphysical investigations, and possess a very acute understanding. Only by dint of laborious and subtle distinctions they are coming to conviction; have a natural turn for metaphysical discussion, and are remarkable for their theological descrimination. Theological disputes, which they are very fond of, had sharpened their wit. Even in a thatched hovel of a solitary island one finds periodicals of polemical theology; however, there are fewer visionaries or speculators, as we would suppose; metaphysically as some are inclined, they have a contempt for everything that does not promote their own real and substantial advantage.* Scotch country-

* These qualities are visible even in their favourite sayings: *Better a little fire that warms, nor a meikle that burns. If it cannot be nae better, it is weel, if it is nae waur. The best payment is the peek bottom.* The acute and profound German metaphysician, *Kant*, was of Scottish extraction.

people are celebrated for giving indirect answers to plain questions. Though cool-minded, though not capable of enthusiasm, and having no buoyancy of imagination to lead them astray, they have, however, a great many tunes, and poets singing in the broad Scotch dialect, which has retained a great deal of old German words and forms of speech.

Diodorus Siculus remarks the cloudy speech and intellect, synecdoctric phrase, and hyperbolical pride of the old Celts. Their credulity was ridiculed by the Roman poets.*

Anglo-Americans. This is a young nation brought into existence, under very extraordinary circumstances, in the same year which saw the first partition of the old republic of Poland. Its poetical youth, its middle ages, passed under the protective shield of England. They have brought over their constitution, their judicial and communal institutes, from the mother country, and liberated it from all encumbrances, which successive conquest of Great Britain have entailed upon the political institutes of England, and what is of far greater moment, they have brought over from England the manly habit of self-government, and submissive obedience to the omnipotence of law. From that time self-reliance with them is not only a virtue, but a duty.

This is a nation of bold, daring, adventurous, yet wary spirits; a commercial, calculating and practical people, of self-sustaining and creative energy, endowed with the liveliest and most acute mercantile instinct, and a marvellous perception for matter-of-fact. Pushing incessantly forwards, they have already surrounded

* Lib. V. Et tumidus Gallus credulitate fruar—Vaniloquum Celto genus.

the remnants of the primitive inhabitants of America and cut them off from the Pacific Ocean by the conquest and rapid colonisation of California, as the Germans of the middle ages have put the Slavonian nations at a distance from the Baltic, by making their settlements on the mouth of their great rivers Oder, Vistula, and Dwina.

Anglo-Americans are noisy, garrulous, and sputtering in their politics; but thoughtful and silent in great emergencies, and prudent in action. In taking any political measure, they look more anxiously to its immediate effects than to its remote consequences. They have more confidence in common sense and experience, in the genius of the cast of *Franklin*, than in subtle arguments. Relying confidently on their mother wit and plain common sense, they see clearly about them; but have no enlarged views. They show a great sagacity in foretelling the effect, but are wanting in the precious faculty of connecting the causes with their correspondent effects and tracing out the consequences, which lie beyond the limits of immediate experience. They have more sagacity than foresight; know how to avail themselves of a favourable opportunity, but are quite ignorant how to start it, direct and influence; are more acute and of quicker apprehension than the English, by an equally unpoetical mind and an equal inaptitude to music. There is besides no other country in the world where one falls in as often with self-made men as in the United States of America, where the human mind does not labour under artificial restraints, where there is no established church, no distinctions, no privileges of birth, no titles except "squire," the only title that has been brought over from England. Self-made

men grow only in the shade of liberty, only under the mild sceptre of self-government. A man, who in his early life had almost no training, and absolutely no education beyond reading and writing with difficulty, has, however, contrived to overcome all difficulties that obstructed his way from his childhood, who has developed his intellectual abilities by following instinctively the natural bent of his mind, got some fragments of science, by dint of perseverence has succeeded in enlightening his mind, and having undergone the greatest hardships, without letting himself be discouraged by frequent disappointments and failures, has conquered at last a respectable position in society, as far as to be reckoned among the remarkable men of his country, has a right to glory in such an achievement and may call himself a self-made man. That such a man is apt to be vain and bragging, is no more to be taken amiss than the wearing of stars and blue ribbons. Mr. *Haliburton* (Sam Slick in England) has exquisitely portrayed the likeness of a self-made Yankee in his bearing, turn of mind, and language; he says that the opinions of Mr. Slick "naturally result from his shrewdness, knowledge of human nature, quickness of perception and appreciation of the ridiculous on the one hand, and on the other from his defective education, ignorance of the usages of society, and sudden elevation from the lower walks of life, to a station, to which he was wholly unqualified."

Some travellers assert, that there is in America an impetuous anxiety as to what is said or thought of them by other nations, and that they ill bear a joke on any peculiarities of national or provincial dialect or custom. To this the Americans appear to have paid too much attention, wholly incompatible with their

high sense of self-respect and just conviction of their importance. A nation that will ere long raise her voice in the council of European nations, may hear with composure of mind an outcry against its national errors. There are besides some more shades in the glorious liberty they are enjoying, and in their system of self-government; as repudiation, nullifying, anti-rentism, gossiping and pomping of private concerns, slavery of the negroes—however, those are but transitory evils, and will be put down by quick distinction between right and wrong, which has more authority over human kind than any majority in the world; whereas in a despotic country a disastrous law is a permanent evil. Anarchy lasts but a season, tyranny is perennial; errors that are laid open and examined are already more than half redressed.

Anglo-Americans, squatters of the human kind, have had as yet no time for philosophical disquisitions, abstruse theories, splendid poetry and music; there is open a great field of exertions for their diversified abilities; great literary fame is in store for them. They have already some names to boast of, even in the higher ranges of literature and science, as *Franklin*, *Jefferson*, *Washington Irving*, *Cooper*, *Prescott*, *Bancroft*, *Stephenson*, *Lister*, *Edgard Poe*, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, &c.

There is a shade of difference among New-Englanders and Southerns: the first descend from those fanatic puritans who left their impress on the character of the people. They were religious in spirit, grave in bearing, starch in manners, thrifty, hornhanded, steel-twisted, ready for all weathers, and grasping; given to levelling doctrines, and, from the very beginning of their existence, laying a claim to national in-

dependence. Severe trials, dangers, and calamities, which attended the early settlement of their barren country, have tamed down and softened their iron bigotry. The propagation of generous principles of civil and religious liberty in England had an immediate and marked influence on New-England, and added greatly to the subversion of the stern dogmas of their ancient faith. During the struggle for independence with England, the necessity of an alliance with other American colonies obliged them to cast off the intolerance and the bigotry of their ancestors. Unrestrained discussion led to the dissemination of the most extended benevolence and the spirit of gentleness, peace, and brotherly love, which is evinced by enactments, founded on the widest principles of tolerance and liberality, and manifested both by the laws and manners. These New-Englanders, having a dry and quaint humour, are called *Yankees*, a name of which they have great reason to be proud, as designating the most industrious, enterprising, frugal, and intelligent people in the world. In the West you find the rich gasconnade and exaggerative language; the spirit of chivalrous *Raleigh* seems to hover to this hour over Virginia; the Virginians are a jovial, profuse, and ostentatious people. Their fathers viewed with dislike the levelling doctrines of the Puritans of New-England, for the form of society in Virginia tended to aristocratic distinctions and power. They preserved for a long time sentiments of loyalty to England, and it required a long course of despotism on the part of George III. and his Parliament, to wean them from Old England and unite with New-Englanders.

The *Polish* nation is composed of Poles, Lithuanians, and Russians, which were blended into one nation, and

thrived for many centuries under the same laws in peace and liberty, as we see now England, Scotland, and Ireland. The Polish or versi-coloured Russia—so called, because it was known by the denominations of red, black, and white Russia—was to Poland in the awkward relation of Ireland to England, and for the same reason: because it was conquered and was of a different religion.* The Polish-Russians belonged to the Greek church, had their own Slavonian liturgy and their religious capital, Kijew; only the Polish-Russian nobility—among whom some trace their descent from *Ruric*, adopted the Polish manners, language, and even religion. The great landed proprietors spent their income in Poland. The whole almost of the *Ukraine*—a name, which means a country bordering on the wilderness and steppes haunted by Tartars—the most fertile of the Polish provinces, exposed to the inroads of Crimean Tartars, was, sixty years ago, the property of absentees, as is now the case in Ireland.

The Polish versi-coloured Russians—who are not to be confounded with Great Russians, better known in history under the name of Muscovites—were rescued from the Tartar yoke by the valour of Poles and Lithuanians in the thirteenth century, a yoke under which the Muscovites groaned for two centuries more.

Lithuanians were originally of a quite different nationality; had nothing in common with Slavonian nations; akin only to Prussians (whom we must not confound with Prussians of our days, who are Germans—as German knights conquered the Prussian

* A good part of Polish Russia is now under Austrian dominion; its ancient capital was *Halitz*, and more modern, *Leopol*.

country lying between the rivers Vistula and Memel, and having exterminated almost the whole of the Prussian nation, took their land and their denomination), Curlanders, and Livonians. Lithuanians, a brave but then a pagan and barbarous nation, were settled near black and white Russians, whom they conquered, and in the thirteenth century adopted their language and religion; but when *Zagellon*, Great Duke of Lithuania, became king of Poland, by marrying the Polish Queen *Hedwige*, the Lithuanian nobility was adopted by the Polish, partook of their armorial ensigns, as well as of their privileges and liberty, and began to assume the Polish language and Polish manners.* At the close of the sixteenth century there was less difference between a Pole and a Lithuanian, than is now between an Englishman and a Scotchman.

There is great analogy in the Polish and English history; the English have *habeas corpus;* the coronation oath of the Polish king—*neminem captivatimus nisi jure victum*—was the foundation of personal liberty in Poland. The stormy Parliaments of Henry III. and Richard II. resemble very much a Polish diet, where occasionally some hands were laid on the pommels of swords. Poland was inhabited by three nations: Poles, Lithuanians, and Russians, as England is by

* We read in *Pepys' Memoirs,* that Charles II. wished to introduce a national dress, never to be altered, and which was taken from Poland. "This day the king begins to put on his vest, and I did see several persons of the House of Lords and Commons too, great courtiers, who are in it; being a long cassocke close to the body of black cloth, and pinked with white silk under it, and a coat over it, and the legs ruffled with black riband, like a pigeon's leg: and, upon the whole, I wish the king to keep it, for it is a very fine and a very handsome garment."

English, Scotch, and Irish. The Poles were united with Lithuania by the marriage of the great Duke of Lithuania with a Polish queen. England has been united with Scotland by the accession of James I. to the throne of England. The Poles have conquered the versi-coloured and little Russia; the English have conquered Ireland. The Poles are of Roman-catholic religion; the Polish-Russians belong to the Greek church; the English have their own established Protestant church; whereas the Irish are Roman catholics. The Polish-Russians were abandoned by their nobility, their natural protectors and leaders; so are the Irish, absenteeism being the bane and curse of that misguided and unfortunate nation. The Polish-Russians were estranged from the Poles on account of their religion, and for that reason South Poland lay open to foreign influence, and sighed after repeal, as now does Ireland, not aware that this would be the means of destruction for both England and Ireland, as it was for Poland; the relation of Polish-Russia to Poland having been the first impulse to her downfall and final partition.

The Poles are a fanciful, vain-glorious, prone to envy, but a kind-hearted, high-minded, and gallant nation, possessing qualities of mind which tend to make men interesting rather than prosperous. They have preserved till our days the chivalrous spirit of its highest and purest time. Easily roused and incensed to enthusiasm, they are as easily discouraged. They exhibit a great want of perseverance in every-day life, as well as in their literary pursuits. While taking a vigilant and anxious care of their liberty, they have lost their national independence; they show a rare constancy and tenacity on one occasion only; it is in the self-devotion and sacrifices, though unavailing, they are

making for the recovery of their independence. They have a notion that a thing that is not given up is not yet lost. The love of their country is their earthly religion. Sixty years of subjection had not the slightest effect in breaking down their pride, taming their audacity, or smothering their indomitable spirit of liberty. Every generation brings its tribute of blood and wealth on the altar of their national independence; every Pole, a grandson of those that have seen out their country, accomplishing that sacred duty, goes with cheerful countenance to the mines of Siberia and the cells of Spielberg.

With such a frame of mind we may rightly infer that they must display more inclination to poetry than to sciences and metaphysical disquisitions. They took, however, a lively part in the theological disputes of the sixteenth century; they have a very rich literature of polemical theology, and five different translations of the Bible. The anti-trinitarian sect of *Socinus* flourished in Poland, and their catechism, called *Racovian*, so often reprinted in Edinburgh, has received its denomination from the Polish town where it was framed. The Poles are the Athenians among Slavonian nations; their highly cultivated language was able in the sixteenth century to cope with the refinements of the Italian. In the Augustan age of their literature, corresponding to the times of *Elizabeth* and *Shakespeare*, they only yielded to Italians, and have to boast of *Copernicus*, their *Newton*, who was born and brought up in Poland, studied astronomy in the Polish Academy of Cracow, never in his life visited Germany, and was the son of a Polish peasant, whose family and name exist in the same village till our days. The reform of their con-

stitution, executed by their last diet, was highly commended and approved of by *Burke*.

Of the three nations of which the Polish nation was composed, the Poles have a more buoyant fancy; the Lithuanians are generally more sober-minded; the Polish-Russians are more contemplative and reserved.

The Slavonian nation of *Bohemia*, the *Tcheks*, have as great natural talent for instrumental music as the Italians for vocal. The country of *Huss* has early shown a great propensity to theological disputes, and nice metaphysical distinctions. The principles of *Wickliff* found in Bohemia a very appropriate ground, and spread widely its roots. But the further development of that gifted nation has been stopped by the unhappy issue of their rebellion. The political consequences of the battle on the White Mountain, and the introduction of jesuits, had all but bereaved them of their national language, their nationality and religion. It is but recently—not more than twenty years ago—since they began to rouse from their prolonged lethargy, which lasted two centuries. Their national literature, which flourished in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, for the most part composed of polemical theology, is little known even to themselves, the jesuits having destroyed every book written in their national language. New exertions of Bohemians in literature display a lively fancy, but no vigour, no deep thought, no enlarged views, but a mawkish reproduction of the same ideas.

The *Wends*, the remnants of a once thriving Slavonian nation, settled on the banks of the Elba, have a great analogy with Irishmen; both produce and are very fond of whisky, and live upon potatoes. The melody of their songs has also a striking resemblance. Both

know only bag-pipes for musical instrument; both are very fond of dancing and singing, and yet their melody is always melancholic, perhaps because both were conquered and trampled upon by a foreign nation. The Wends and the Irish speak their own native languages, which not being embodied in a literature, are fastly waning, though rich and poetical. Both are cherishing the descendants of their ancient princes. Both are superstitious, shrewd, and prone to exaggeration in their statements. Both are occasionally revolutionary, but of somewhat slavish deportment towards those in power. Both like to appear shabby, though able to dress more decently. Leading a miserable life, they are, however, capable of great exertions, but prefer being idle, but, notwithstanding their misery and miserable food, are very prolific.

The mental parts of *Russians* cannot yet be well appreciated, as the iron rule of Warago-Normans, the degrading domination of Mongols and Byzantine notions, had retarded and hindered the progress and development of their national genius. The Russian exhibits a great propensity to aping, which he is apt of confounding with imitation; without being witty, he is very shrewd, and there is a common saying, that it would take three Jews to cheat one Russian. Being exceedingly clever in imitation, the Russian never dares to invent, to have his own way, or to go ahead. The Boyars show a great eagerness in imitation of foreign manners, are known to have the same national shrewdness, with some addition of levity and vanity, being superior only in tact, a talent of the saloon, which they raised into the virtue of their caste.

The whole of *Hungary* has formerly been peopled by Slavonians, and in the eighth century there was a thriving Slavonian monarchy; but in the ninth it has been conquered by the Tartar nation, called Madiar or Ungars, who settled in the core of the Slavonian monarchy, on the plains between the Danube and Theiss, where they found sufficient range for their numerous stock of horses and herds of cattle. The overwhelmed Slavonians fled to the north amidst and in the vicinity of Carpathian mountains, or remained on the outskirts of their country, encompassing the Ungars, their conquerors, on three sides. When in the thirteenth century *Bathu-Khan* laid waste that country with sword and fire, the kings of Hungary invited Saxon colonists to their depopulated provinces, who became miners in the golden districts, and artisans in towns. Thus there are in Hungary three nations of a different extraction, manners, and language; the Ungars in the middle, Slavonians in the outskirts, and Saxons scattered over the whole country in towns and mine districts. That circumstance may in some measure account why that nation has made, till lately, but very indifferent progress in civilization, and did not come up to the standard, not only of the nations of western Europe, but even of their immediate neighbours, the Poles and the Austrians, though Hungarian nobility under the sway of the Habsburgian dynasty maintained, till lately, their privileges and liberty.

The Slavonians of Hungary, or *South Slavonians*, have a great aptitude for acquiring a great diversity of knowledge, and improving their intellectual abilities by the cultivation of literature and science. It has been remarked that Slavonians in general bear on

that account a great resemblance to Greeks.* They have more ready wit than the Madiars, but are superficial, having from nature no liking for deep research and obtuse disquisition.

The *Madiar* is of a dull comprehension; his ideas are slowly formed and are not embodied in abundance of words, nor brought forth in conversation, as is the case with Greeks, Frenchmen, and Poles; his mind is acting inwardly. He is apt to brood and ponder for a long time over what he has learned. He is acquiring knowledge for himself and is hoarding it in the inmost recesses of his mind; it is but after a long intimacy that one is enabled to discover the hidden treasures of his mind, of which he is not prone to make a show.

The *Saxons* of Hungary and Transylvania are in a higher scale of civilization than both Madiars and Slavonians, have more polished manners, and exhibit in conversation more reading and acquired knowledge, especially in sciences, but have only second-rate capacities to boast of. Mediocrity is the stamp of their mental character; there never happened a man of genius among them, nor any remarkable man, either in action or speculation.

Besides these three nations, we meet in Hungary with that wandering and mysterious race, the *gipsies*, remarkable for their extraordinary talents for music, both instrumental and vocal.

The *Greeks* were the first of European nations that emerged from barbarism; and notwithstanding

* Ingenia Slavorum habent sane Græcum quiddam referentia.—Ulrich von Hutten in App. ad Tacit. Germ.

the calamities of endless domestic feuds, only in two centuries of their national existence, came to civilization, literature, fine arts, philosophy, and history, which were carried by them to a high perfection amidst continual wars, attended with poverty and the greatest simplicity of life and manners. The European genius now swaying and predominating the whole world, took its first start in Greece. The battle of Marathon has decided its superiority over Asia, who has been hitherto the nursery of human kind.

The Grecian mind displayed itself in giving to every object in nature an ideal expression; the ancient Greeks, whose acute perception seemed granted only for the creation of the beautiful, had a fertile, inventive, and comprehensive genius. *Plato*, *Sophocles*, *Aristophanes*, *Thucydides*, and *Demosthenes*, all till now unequalled, give a correct idea of the chequered excellences of the Greek genius. They have created the first European language, and turned it into the most flexible instrument of thought, through which the mind of man has yet breathed the music of poetry and eloquence. In literature they have discovered and carried to perfection almost every species of composition. History was born in Greece with *Herodote*, and hardly any modern literature may boast of an historian worthy to be placed alongside of Thucydides. In oratory they have left to succeeding ages only models for imitation; for where is the second *Demosthenes?* If we except political economy and chemistry, they have laid the foundation and given the name to all sciences which are now cultivated among civilized nations. In speculative philosophy they have known

and tried all possible methods of investigating abstruse truths, and even questions lying beyond the limits of the human intellect. There is not one single philosophical system whose germs may not be traced out in their writings, though we possess but a small part of them. Their philosophical works are as remarkable for their form as for their matter; they are distinguished not only for their great depth and great subtlety, but, as in the case of *Plato*, are resplendent with the graces of taste, wit, and imagination. That harsh and rugged philosophy, which in the darkness of the middle ages degenerated into scholastic philosophy, was the growth of later, unfortunate times, when the Greeks forfeited their liberty and independence.

Their religion originated in the nature of human faculties and the spontaneous tendencies of the uncultivated intellect. They were the first to indulge in the free and bold spirit of speculation—in the inquiry concerning the creation and its Creator. They were not subject to any established system of cosmogony, guarded by the jealousy of priestcraft. They have laid the foundation, and almost finished the science, of mathematics, and were the founders of the inductive study of politics.

There is, then, no denying, that of all nations of the world the Greeks were most profusely and liberally gifted by nature, with all the powers and excellences of reason, imagination, and inventive genius. Only in physics and mechanics modern nations have outdone the Greeks; but in eloquence, poetry, politics, history, strategies, mathematical sciences and fine arts, modern Europeans may but rarely boast of having equalled

them. Besides, when we reflect to what pitch of perfection were brought the three arts depending on drawing, as statuary, painting, and architecture, which speak to the imagination and the eyes, one would believe that ancient Greeks had no capacity for metaphysical disquisitions; but turning our attention to their speculative philosophy, containing everything subtle, deep, ingenious, every form or shape of philosophical inquiry; idealism, materialism, scepticism, sophism, the supernatural philosophy or ecstasy of *Plotinus*—no one would ever suspect them of having attained at the same time such excellency in poetry and the fine arts.

But, on the other hand, we must not omit mentioning that the superstition in its grossest form was pervading all their thoughts, and influenced even the dreams of their philosophers; that they seemed to have a natural bent to sophistry, and liked better to dissert, argue, discuss, and dispute, than to observe or make experiments, even in matters in which the observation is the only means of investigating truth, and the inductive method proves to be the plainest and most appropriate. But their genius lay not that way; they were inventors of the dialectician art; dialectics were their engrossing pursuit; the search after truth was less thought of than victory over an antagonist, and their philosophy exhausted itself in questions which are totally beyond the province of the human faculties.

Among Grecian *clans* there was some difference to be recorded: the *Ionians* had more ingenuity, imagination, and more brilliant parts; whereas the *Dorians* were more obtuse and stationary. The *Lacedemonians*

were ignorant; the *Bœotians*, plunged in mental torpor, were notorious on account of the dulness of their mind, rusticity, and phlegmatical temper.

The *modern Greeks* seem not to differ from the ancients. "It was the quibbling sophistical Greeks who, proud of their recently imported gnosticism, perverted by its mystical doctrine the simple tenets of Christianity. *The Greeks, ever preferring the improbable and the marvellous to the natural and the probable*, have contended for taking in a literal sense a thousand expressions which, in the phraseology of the East, were only meant as figurative and symbolical, and have set the baneful example of admitting in religious matters the most extraordinary deviations from the course of nature and from human experience, on such partial and questionable evidence, as in the ordinary affairs of men, and in modern courts of justice, would not be received on the most common and probable occurrence."

"You mistake," says *Thomas Hope*, "in thinking the Greeks of Constantinople different from the Greeks of Chios. Our nation is everywhere the same; the same at Petersburg as at Cairo; the same now as it was twenty centuries ago. The complexion of the modern Greek may receive a different cast from different surrounding objects; the core is still the same as in the days of Pericles. Credulity, versatility, and thirst of distinction, from the earliest period, formed, still form, and ever will continue to form, the basis of the Greek character; and the dissimilarity in the external appearance of the nation arises, not from any radical change in its temper and disposition, but only from the incidental variation in the means through which

the same propensities are to be gratified. The ancient Greeks worshipped an hundred gods, the modern Greeks adore as many saints. The ancient Greeks believed in oracles and prodigies, in incantations and spells; the modern Greeks have faith in relics and miracles, in amulets and divinations. The ancient Greeks brought rich offerings and gifts to the shrines of their deities, for the purpose of obtaining success in war and pre-eminence in peace; the modern Greeks hang up dirty rags round the sanctuaries of their saints, to shake off an ague or to propitiate a mistress. The former were stanch patriots at home and subtle courtiers in Persia; the latter defy the Turks in Mayne, and fawn upon them at the Tana. Besides, was not every commonwealth of ancient Greece as much a prey to cabals and factions as every community of modern Greece? Does not every modern Greek preserve the same desire for supremacy, the same readiness to undermine by every means, fair or foul, his competitors, which was displayed by his ancestors? Do not the Turks of the present day resemble the Romans of past ages in their respect for the ingenuity, and, at the same time, in their contempt for the character, of their Greek subjects? And does the Greek of the Tana show the least inferiority to the Greek of the Piræus in quickness of perception, in fluency of tongue, and in fondness for quibbles, for disputation, or for sophistry? Believe me, the very difference between the Greeks of times past and of the present day arises only from their thorough resemblance, from that equal pliability of temper and of faculties in both which has ever made them receive with equal readiness the impression

of every mould, and the impulse of every agent. When patriotism, public spirit, and pre-eminence in arts, science, literature, and warfare, were the road to distinction, the Greeks shone the first of patriots, of heroes, of painters, of poets, and of philosophers. Now that craft and subtlety, adulation and intrigue, are the only pass to greatness, those same Greeks are what you see them."

CHAPTER III.

The Intelligence of Animals, and its Limits.

Comparative anatomy has thrown a vivid light upon the structure of the human body, beginning with the first rudiments of an organ, and pursuing its growing perfection and development till it came to the highest perfection in man. The same method applied to mental philosophy would lay open a new field of inquiry. It appears, however, that zoologists did not give as yet a due weight to the observations on the mental capacities of animals: the wonderful operosity of ants, the useful industry of bees, the great ingeniousness of beavers, the docility of the dog, have however attracted general attention, and could not have been overlooked by such keen observers as *Hubert* and *Buffon;* but there is as yet wanting a book, in which the observations of zoologists, concerning the compass of intelligence in different animals, would be brought together and compared with those on the human intellects. Mental philosophy expects the coming of a *George Cuvier*, who would work up into an edifice the crude materials consisting of very interesting, but loose observations.

The Baconian method of inquiring into the nature of things, applied with such success to natural philosophy, was not, as yet, followed out in mental philosophy. Metaphysicians profess to acquire know-

ledge by mere intuition, are satisfied with reading their conscience or resting their opinions on sophistical arguments; but mental philosophy, enclosed in so narrow limits, will perpetually run round the same circle. In order to make some real, not verbal, progress, and to lay open a new road leading to its advancement, we must take a larger range, and first of all try to sketch out a natural history of human intelligences; secondly, a natural history of the compass of the intelligences of animals, beginning with its dawn in vertebrated animals; thirdly, to give a comparative description of the animal and human intelligences, and lastly, to draw out a mental palæontology, a delineation of the traces of the mental conformation and structure preserved in those fossil remnants of the human intellect, which are contained in Asiatic mythologies, in Vedas, Zend-Avesta, &c., and in two extinct European literatures, of ancient Greeks and Romans, which have as yet never been considered as a simple impress of the mind, capable of putting us on the trace of the differences in mental capacities and biass, developed amidst a widely different civilization. According to such method, the comparative mental philosophy will have to begin with the first apparition, the first discernible symptom of intelligence, separating itself and branching off from the blind animal instinct, and to go up through all shades to the highest intelligence of a *Shakespeare*, a *Newton*, or a *Macaulay*.

The blind instinct is prevailing in animals; in some of them it appears to be the only incentive and guide of the animal volition and motions; whereas in man, instinct is the more waning and obliterated; the higher he is in the scale of civilization, the more his higher

faculties of imagination and reason are developed, and the nearer they are brought to the perfection which they are capable of.

Descartes has asserted that animals are mere moving machines, unconscious of the movements they are performing. According to the definition of *Linnæus*, an animal is an organized body, that is living and feeling. The modern physiologists have proved, that animals have a consciousness of their existence, and are capable of being afraid of pain. There are in animals two movements; one voluntary, and another merely mechanical; the latter is connected with their vegetative life; that is, this kind of life, which makes them grow and develop themselves, which makes that without the least participation on the part of their will their heart is beating, their blood is circulating, assimilation is going on; in a word, that they are living; but the voluntary movement which constitutes the difference between animals and plants cannot take place without a nervous system or something equivalent, by means of which the being that is performing such movements perceives and executes that which its judgment has determined upon; it is true that sometimes such volition is manifesting itself very dimly; it does, however, take place, for an animal cannot desire without having previously felt and judged. All vertebrated animals have feeling, acquire some notions, which they recollect, execute the desires of their will according to their ideas, and are endowed with different degrees of intelligence. Besides the vertebral column, which is the constituent part of intelligent animals, they are endowed with brain and spinal marrow, from whence arise the nerves, which are the

immediate agents of every intelligence. They have distinct senses, symmetrical organs of the movement going in pairs and fixed to the interior part of the skeleton. Fishes, reptiles, birds, and mammalia, are the four classes of the great section, to whom *Lamarck* ascribes the great attribute of intelligence.

The question of the animal intelligence was, from *Descartes* and *Buffon*, for more than a century a subject of metaphysical disquisition; from *Buffon* to *Cuvier* it was illustrated and brought nearer its solution by the Baconian method of experience and induction. *Cuvier*, researching the limits of the intelligence of different species of animals, endeavoured to ascertain the line separating instinct from intelligence, as well as the line dividing the human intellect from the intelligence of animals. *Descartes* and *Buffon*, rightly averse to attributing to animals a human intellect, but not aware of the limits separating the human intellect from the animal intelligence, were of opinion that animals are wholly deprived of intelligence; whereas *Condillas* and *Leroy*, overlooking the wide difference between instinct and reason, attribute to animals even the highest faculties of the human understanding, because they are arguing from their actions, which if they were actually proceeding (which is not the case) from the incentives of intelligence, would necessarily imply the operation of those higher faculties.

The following degrees of intelligence were ascertained in mammalia: gnawers are on the lowest scale; there is more intelligence developed in ruminants, and yet more in pachyderms, at the head of which class are the horse and the elephant. Carnivorous mammalia display still more intelligence; the

foremost of them is the dog; but the highest intelligence is found in quadrumana, as the Orang-Outang and Chimpanze. These degrees of intelligence in mammalia are brought out by physiology and anatomy, which show in those animals a gradual development of the brain, that organ being the seat of intelligence in animals. The gnawers, as the marmot, the castor, the squirrel, the hare, do not distinguish the men by whom they are attended from others; ruminating animals know their master; but a simple changing of dress is sufficient to make them not to know him again. A bison in the *Jardin des Plantes* of Paris, very submissive to his guard, rushed upon him the moment he changed his dress. Two rams living peaceably together, when clipped, begin fighting immediately. The startling intelligence of the pachyderma is generally known. *M. Cuvier* is of opinion that pigs, notwithstanding their coarse appetites, are not very inferior, in point of intelligence, to elephants; a wild boar gets easily tamed and domesticated, knows his guard, and obeys him. Carnivorous animals and quadrumana display the highest degree of intelligence, and the orang-outang appears to be the most intelligent among the animals. A young orang-outang, not above fifteen months old, evinced a longing for society, took affection to the person that attended him, liked caresses, was sulky when not yielded to, and showed his anger by crying or rolling on the ground. He liked to perch upon the tree. When once a person pretended to climb up into the tree, in order to take him down, he immediately took to shaking it with all his might, in order to deter him from climbing; when that person kept away, he stopped; when he neared it again, he began shaking. It is evident that the

young orang-outang was arguing from his feelings: as it often happened that shaking the trunk upon which he was perched put him in a fright, he concluded that it would have the same effect upon others, that is, he deduced a general rule from a particular circumstance. In order to open the door of the chamber in which he was kept, he got upon a chair, which being removed on purpose, he brought another and placed it on the same spot when he wished to open the door. When refused a thing for which he was longing, not daring to take revenge upon the person who was not to be prevailed upon to yield to his wishes, he turned his anger against himself, knocked the ground with his head in order to excite sympathy, just as naughty children do. He was aware where the key was lying, knew how to put it into the lock, and how to open the door. Sometimes the key was placed on the chimney-piece in order to put it out of his reach, but he climbed upon it along the rope which was hanging from the ceiling for his amusement; to render that rope shorter it was tied in a knot, but he untied the knot. Seeing once an old stooping man, that was walking slowly and with a dragging pace, he did with complacency everything that was desired of him, keeping the whole time his eye upon the old man, and watching all his movements; at last, when he was about to retreat, he took gently his stick out of his hand, went round the room stooping, and pacing slowly, in perfect imitation of what he had just seen, and, as it appeared, closely observed; then he returned the stick to the owner without being ordered, which goes to prove that he is not destitute of the faculty of observation. But that startling intelligence, so early and rashly developed,

is fast waning and decaying with age; for though in his younger days an orang-outang startles us with his penetration, cunning, and skill, when arrived at the time of puberty he becomes brutal and unmanageable. In general, all monkeys and apes are decreasing in their intelligence with the growth of their forces.

Besides some shreds of reason, animals are endowed with a native instinct, which differs greatly from reason. There is an immeasurable interval between instinct and reason, as between the abstract language of men and the bleating of sheep, the chattering of a monkey, or the general language by which a brute expresses its material wants. The castor, belonging to the gnawers, one of the least intelligent mammalia, has a marvellous instinct of building a habitation upon the water, of making roads, raising up dikes, with an ingenuity which would imply a great intelligence, if his ingenuity originated in it; but *M. Cuvier* has brought up young castors, early separated from their parents, which consequently had no time to learn any thing from them; however, these animals, shut up in a cage, where they had no need of building, led and prompted by a blind but irresistible instinct, began building, thus giving evidence that their talent for building is the result of instinct, an unconquerable, blind, and unchanging principle; whereas intelligence is modifiable, conditional, and elective. A castor that is building a house, a bird that is constructing its nest, are acting by instinct; whereas a horse or a dog, that learns even the meaning of some words and obeys our commands, is acting with intelligence. Instinct is native; castors are building without having been taught, and are pushed on to action by a continual and irresistible force. Every

thing in the animal instinct is inborn and fatal, whereas in intelligence everything is the result of experience and training; the dog obeys by dint of training, but out of his free will. Besides, everything is particular in the instinct; that marvellous industry and ingenuity with which the castor builds his house cannot be applied to any other purpose; whereas everything in the intelligence is general; the flexibility of attention and conception which the dog exhibits in obeying may be turned to account on any other occasion. It is therefore evident, that the intelligence of animals will not stand comparison with the human understanding; everything that has the appearance of a superior intelligence in animals, being the result of a blind and mechanical force, which is not under the control of their volition.

Animals receive through their senses the same impressions as we do by ours, and keep the traces of those impressions just as we do; connect them into varied and chequered associations; and as they are combining those associations and deduce judgments from their relations, they are then endowed with intelligence; but here we meet with its limits, for their intelligence has no consciousness of its own existence, never takes any notice of itself, in a word, animals lack the great faculty of reflection, which has the power of turning its views upon itself and its operations, and to study its own nature. Reflection, then, is the faculty which constitutes the limits of the animal intelligence, forms a deep line of demarcation, and separates it from the human understanding. That faculty which is reflecting on itself, intelligence that is conscious of itself, and is searching its own nature, knowledge which knows itself, forms a parti-

cular class of mental phenomena, and constitutes the main feature of the human reason. Everything beyond that line, dividing the animal intelligence from the human understanding, is out of the reach of animals. They cannot transgress that boundary even by dint of the most ingenious and patient training. It is there that the spiritual world begins, which is the exclusive patrimony of men, from which animals are by nature for ever excluded. Animals have feelings, they know and think; but it is only the man that is endowed by nature with the quality of feeling that he feels, of knowing that he knows, of thinking that he thinks; it is only man that is endowed with consciousness, with the faculty of contemplation and reflection; and it is this want of the faculty of reflection which makes the operations of the mind the objects of its own thoughts, that has deprived the animals of language or other signs to express thoughts, for by their cries or singing they are only expressing their feelings.

CHAPTER IV.

Stupidity and its different degrees, removes, and shades. Idiots and Cretins—Irish innocents—A half-crazed simpleton—A tip-top fool—A blinking idiot—A superstitious fool—A gainsaying fool—A questioning fool—A learned fool—A coxcomb—A witling—A puling and self-admiring fool — A smooth-mannered fool — An habitual liar—A giddy-brained fool—A half-wit—A simpleton and a ninny-hammer—The fanatic.

"Mas sabe el necio en su casa, que el cuerdo en la agena. Eso no, Sancho, respondió D. Quijote, que el necio en su casa ni en la agena sabe nada, á causa que sobre el cimiento de la necedad no asienta ningun discreto edificio."

CERVANTES.

STUPIDITY being the most striking mental phenomenon, appears to have of yore attracted the notice of men in general, as well as of poets and philosophers; but they have only endeavoured to set off its influence upon our bearing, manners, and morals, hardly ever attempting to analyze it or scatch out its natural history. We will venture at the performance of that most difficult task, without distorting its likeness into caricature.

A barren mind, extreme dulness of perception, a blindness to self-evident truths, a strange obliquity of judgment, or a total lack of the reasoning faculty; a tardy and unavailing understanding, incapable of serving, instead of a regulator, or directing the other intellectual faculties, or even a decided impotency of the reasoning

faculty; a native abhorrence of a general and more comprehensive view of things, a disturbed harmony among the faculties, the links of their mutual dependence more or less loosened; sometimes the cerebral organs put frightfully out of tune—are indications or symptoms of folly, and constitute the intrinsic nature of the lamentable weakness of the intellect, ycleped *stupidity*.

It is easily ascertained that, extreme dulness of perception and understanding excepted, a deficiency in any other faculty of mind, as for instance, a leaky memory, a withered fancy, a dry imagination, discoloured associations, may enhance the native mediocrity of intellect, but are not sufficient to render a man irretrievably stupid. On the other side it is evident, that even a wonderful memory or a fertile imagination is of as little use to a fool as would be the human understanding to oysters.

If by chance a fool has some ideas, he is never able to put them together, nor to ascertain their relations, but is fagoting his notions as they fall. The idea of causation, which is the eye of the human understanding, seems to be dormant in his mind, or to be shrouded in a dense mist, or to lie benumbed; for his intellect is almost never roused to action or kept in motion by the innate desire of the human intellect to inquire into the reason of things. There are, besides, certain mistakes and logical errors particular to stupidity; a fool is never able to make a right distinction between cause, inducement, motive, and its effect; he never fails of taking things or circumstances that preceded or lay close by, for the cause of those that are coming after, or of confounding a proof with the thing to be proved, or giving out the consequence drawn from an argument for its evidence, or of mis-

taking exclamation, invective, or ridicule, for an argument. He often takes comparisons for the object which was to be illustrated or set off by them, and sees nothing in poetry but rhymes; is unable to distinguish tradition from history; knows nothing of limits to which our confidence in the evidence of senses may safely be extended, nothing of ascertaining and correcting blunders and mistakes of one sense by the instrumentality of others; is never up to discovering logical errors in his own reasonings, though short and rare between, nor sophism in that of others. He is sure of stumbling on the very threshold of his argument, and is misconceiving and misrepresenting at its every turn; in fact, all his arguments are either too fragile to bear the handling of reason, or they are defective. A fool is continually destroying his own conclusions, nor is he capable of giving them a shadow of colour; a bet is his last argument, not aware that bets are fool-traps,

> "Where the wise,
> Like spiders, lie in ambush for the flies."
>
> DRYDEN.

Even in a common-place conversation, you see him wandering blindly in a syllogistic circle, with such untoward haste as to puzzle our understanding. Unable to distinguish, he lacks the sound judgment and circumspection necessary to detecting the relation of things, or their analogies or differences, or to weigh the relative value of either reason or facts, or to notice the delicate shadows of thought which are embodied in a highly cultivated language. Words are but loosely linked in his memory with their relative things or ideas, and this is with him the

fountain-head of the grossest blunders, errors, and nonsense; hence it comes that he is condemning persons or opinions, whose names he was not long ago extolling with unbounded praise. The whole stock of his knowledge is but a chaos of scattered ideas, fragments of reasonings, which form a tangled and knotted tissue, impossible to unravel, and which with him make up for the deficiencies of the reasoning faculty.

But in the dark recesses of stupidity lies hidden a yet more abundant and unremitting fountain of errors and mistakes, amongst which is their absolute incapacity of distinguishing *knowledge* from *faith;* taking it for granted that he knows everything, the fool is easily led into error, and gives a ready credence to any assertion; and if any absurd proposition or ridiculous pretension fails to impose upon his credulity, it is only because it was not absurd and ridiculous enough. Notwithstanding his constitutional gullibility he has got his own very strong opinions, though far from being founded upon any indisputable basis. A fool may be insinuated, but never convinced; it is even more difficult to make him give up his opinion, than to bestow upon him a new one; but prejudices and errors the most difficult, and we may say, quite impossible, to be eradicated from the mind of a fool, are those which are the direct and genuine offspring of the deficiency of his faculties, as he sticks to them with love and pertinacity, and returns to them with pleasure, as the Indian to his primeval forests, or as the stork from the foremost region of the globe to her wonted nest.

Having, as we flatter ourselves, somewhat lifted up the veil covering the intrinsic nature of stupidity, be-

fore we take to portraying different kinds of folly, let us at first proceed—so far as the scope of this work will allow—to tracing its influence upon the mind, moral constitution, and manners. It is a trite observation, that where a sensible man is likely to imitate, the fool is aping; he is never wise before it is too late. *Livius* makes the remark that event is the instructor of fools. *Stultorum magister eventus.* Being unable to make the high purpose of the soul command the thoughts of the mind, the fools condemn or praise without any plausible reason or even a motive. Like a child, whose incomplete intellect has as yet no time to disclose and develop its native powers, the fool is vegetating in the present time, knows nothing of the times gone by, and cares not of the future. Fools are hunting novelty, not because it proves to be an improvement, but because it is new. They are taking measures ill adapted to the object proposed, and, like *Monsieur Jourdain*, would call for their morning gown in order to hear music better. The knowledge of themselves is out of their reach; they are even totally unconscious of the imbecility and dulness of their intellect; and thus prevented from improving and cultivating their mind, they will be fools to their dying day. They too often arrogate and cherish a high opinion of themselves, and there is nothing capable of offending them more bitterly, than a strike at their understandings, any misgiving about their intellectual abilities; in order to veil its main deficiency, they often get out of their depth, have recourse to a dogmatical tone, and will assert boldly some paradoxical or high-flown opinion, which it is out of their power to vindicate. They hope to appear mighty clever by uttering with emphasis some trite or

sweeping sentences; know nothing of doubting or wavering in their convictions, and are absolutely ashamed to be ignorant, even of a circumstance which may happen to be out of the reach of the human understanding.

It has been remarked that fools herd together, understand better, and put more reliance in the opinions of their equals, labouring under the same mental disease, than in men of higher parts, not excepting those nearer to them on the scale of intellectual abilities, as men of plain common-sense, whose superiority over them is not so conspicuous. In the main, fools don't like to associate with clever people, except when bent on proving their pretended superiority. They cherish a great diffidence, even an instinctive antipathy to men of genius, and would blithely make them ridiculous, but for a total want of wit. They, moreover, have a rooted horror of people of higher parts, and look on them with green-eyed jealousy, one of the most degrading, mean, and contemptible of all human vices, which is found to be the constant attendant of imbecility of mind and stupid mediocrity.

We have no mind to dwell liquorishly on the obnoxious influence of stupidity upon the manners and morals of fools; some few observations will do. A fool is arrogant and assuming, jealous, self-conceited, bragging and meddling, and thus a very troublesome companion on board a steam-boat, a bore in society, a plague in town, and a nuisance in the country. There is nothing more terrible than the temerity of a fool. *Pope* says that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." The celebrated *Cardinal Richelieu* used to say, that he was more afraid of a stupid adversary

than of a cunning one, because, says he, you can never guess what a fool might venture to do; he is always ready of making mischief to himself, and you have a chance of encountering him where you least expected. No wonder, then, that the very sight of a fool is making a disagreeable impression upon our mind. We pity the blind, yet we may love and respect him; but it is impossible for us to form a favourable opinion of a fool, and very difficult to like him, though in charity we should, for we are in great error with regard to fools, as it appears to us, at the first blush, as if their stupidity was of their own making, or a consequence of their wickedness or depravity, which is doing them the greatest injustice; for the cecity of intellect as well as that of the eyes is one of those visitations of Providence we are unable to account for. It is, then, our duty to let them enjoy in peace the liberty of talking any amount of nonsense with perfect impunity, nay, even to cherish and forgive them, because "they don't know what they are about."

The errors of the dull are seldom productive of mirth; in portraying fools it was not our purpose to exhibit their ludicrous side only, show them up, or overcharge the likeness, and make them a laughing-stock, or an object of disgust or hatred; on the contrary, disclosing the intrinsic nature of stupidity in such a manner as to convince our readers that this mental lameness, almost in all its shades and removes, is far from being a consequence of their wickedness, and consequently not imputable to them; we flatter ourselves in having facilitated—at least to some of our readers of a milder disposition, and more indulgent—the performance of our duty as

Christians, in the fulfilment of the behest of the gospel, which enjoins us to cherish our fellow-creatures, fools not excepted. However, if the exhibition of some folly happens to excite a smile, quite against our wish, we beg to be excused, as in leading about the folly in all its nakedness, it was not always in our power to throw a charitable veil upon the ridicule of some untoward exertions of mental impotency; *difficile erat satyram non scribere.*

On the last step of the mental scale, but a shade above the intelligence, guided by the native instinct of the brute, stands the *born idiot.* Idiocy or fatuity is a remarkable impotency and obliteration of perception and the reasoning faculty; an idiot, though sometimes apt to remember the facts, is unable to trace their relations, and does not reason at all. In general, idiocy consists simply in an impaired or weakened state of mental powers, it is a torpor of the faculties, in higher degree amounting to total insensibility to every impression; it is not always native, but sometimes arises without bodily disease: a person mentioned by *Dr. Rush* was so violently affected by some failure in trade, that he was deprived, almost instantly, of all his mental faculties, had no sensations and thoughts of any kind. In such a state of mental prostration he continued nearly five years, and then suddenly recovered.

Idiocy is dependent on the soil, and generated by local and material influences, which mar and obtund the development of mental organs, and prevent the manifestations of intelligence, as it is elicited and confirmed by the circumstance, that wherever civilization has penetrated, the number of idiots is in decrease. Already *Ramond* had ascertained this fact in the

Pyrenees; others have observed a similar diminution of idiots in Switzerland. Many are sensible of the fact, that the number of idiots is decreasing wherever civilization has led to the augmentation of the means of subsistence, changed the habits of daily life, and taught the inhabitants of sheltered and marshy valleys some dietetical rules, fit to make them avoid the deleterious influence of the soil.

Cretinism is but a form of idiocy, developed under certain local circumstances, and always accompanied by bodily deformities, more or less disgusting and loathful. The main features of cretinism are those bodily deformities which are rarely seen connected with simple idiocy. Besides a goitre, sometimes of monstrous dimensions, cretins are remarkable for their flabby flesh, wrinkled and shrivelled skin, pale and wan complexion in infancy, yellowish or tawny after puberty; they are covered with the itch or other cutaneous diseases; have a big tongue, sometimes hanging out, a large and gaping mouth, from which slaver is drivelling down their protruded lips, a flat nose, red eyes, swollen-out eyelids, are blear-eyed and generally squinting. Their head, huge in infancy, gets afterwards very small and conical; their neck is either slender or big and short. They have a narrow chest with depressed sides. Their limbs are deformed, almost always half bent, and swinging as if about to slip out of joint; and they have a hoarse, guttural voice, resembling the cry of brutes. The cretin child is sucking very feebly, is always sleepy; his intelligence is dawning very late, and is never completely developed; he begins to speak very late, if he is not deaf and dumb, and arrives very late to the time of puberty. Cretins, as well as idiots, in general

live rarely above thirty years; they are indolent, lazy, voracious, and lascivious.

According to *Holst's* statistics there are many cretins in Norway. *Dr. Halliday* has found a great many idiots in Scotland. *Sir G. Taunton* met with a great number of them upon the marches of the Chinese Tartary. Many travellers are describing the cretins in the passes and valleys of the Alps, till twelve hundred metres above the level of the sea, at Pyrenees, at Andes and Cordilleras, at the valley of Aosta, at la Maurienne, at some parts of Faucigny, at some valleys of the Grisons, at the canton of Argovia. They are to be found at Tyrol, Wurtemberg, the Hartz, the Erzhgeberge, at Hungary, at the Apennines, at French Jura, at Oural, at the valleys of Tartary, Thibet, Bengal, at the isles of Sondé, in some parts of the North American Union, and in Africa among the ridges of the Atlas.

The cretins of the lower Vallais in Switzerland are either perfect cretins, who in point of intellect are scarcely removed above mere brutes; as some of them cannot speak, do not know how to carry food to the mouth, and are even unable of swallowing it; they are sitting by the fire, are basking in the sun, and display no trace of intelligence. The semi-cretins show some intelligence, remember common events, understand what they have been told, express themselves in an intelligent manner, though only on the most common topics; but have no ideas, seem not to understand the words of their prayers, cannot be taught to read or write and even to number their fingers. The most intelligent cretins learn to read and write, though they little understand what they are reading; they are, however, acutely alive to their

own interest, and extremely litigious; without prudence or discretion in their conduct and the management of their affairs, yet unwilling to be advised, and obstinate; capable of imitating slavishly some arts, but unable to invent, or even to learn the first elements of arithmetic. Their memory is only capable of retaining facts or words, in the same order and connexion as they were apprehended; but they are unable of forming new associations or tracing relations, and, like all fools, are quite deficient in the higher faculties of the mind.

But what may be the cause of cretinism? *De Saussure* has proved that it is not generated by a certain quality of the water, for the same water which is drenching the thirst of the cretins of the lower valley, is drunk with impunity higher up the mountain, nearer its rise, where it is colder, less mixed with air, and as much saturated with salts. Nobody is now advancing that misery, debauchery, or drunkenness is the cause of cretinism. *Fodéré* ascribes it to the air saturated with moisture, which, producing the goître, is the cause of cretinism. But there is no place where the air is more saturated with moisture than the countries lying on the sea-shore—as the coast of La Manche, for instance—and yet there are no goitrous persons; besides, the goître cannot account for cretinism, for there are in certain parts more goitrous persons than cretins, and because some cretins have a very small goître. *M. Rambuteau* was of opinion that cretinism, which he has diligently observed in Vallais, is caused by the emanation of marshy tracts generated by the frequent inundations of the Rhone; but there are no such marshes in the valley of Aosta, as well as in many other places swarming with cretins.

Hence, to account for cretinism, we have but the thick, scorching, and stagnant air, which is hardly ever renewed by winds in those narrow passes sheltered from the north wind, that air which produces a feeling of a liquid rather than of a gaseous substance. Fodéré has remarked that indolence, laziness, obtuseness of intellect as well as of feeling, always accompany such deleterious air.

Ireland appears to abound, both in the country and towns, in semi-intelligent, half-witted creatures, sometimes called *innocents* or *naturals;* though we have seen that idiocy is as frequent in many other countries, where human misery has arrived to the Irish standard. The following graphical description of several Irish fools, by an eye-witness, will give our readers the most correct idea of idiocy:—

"The housekeeper of a parish priest had a son, who was one of those delectable examples of semi-rationality. His head never had room for more than one idea at a time; nor could his memory well retain more than one sentence, and that a short one, and he found even that of a very difficult utterance. He was, nevertheless, frequently employed by his mother to go on errands. She was one day making hog's puddings, and wanted pepper and allspice to season the ingredients; she desired her son to go to the grocer's, in the neighbouring village, and bring her back a supply of both. 'Be sure you don't forget,' said she; and not being skilled in caligraphy, she had no means left for security but to make him repeat the words over and over again, and to desire him to continue to do so unceasingly until he arrived at the grocer's.

"Poor Thady accordingly set off at a brisk trot,

repeating to himself as he went along, 'Pepper and allspice! pepper and allspice! pepper and allspice!' until, having overlooked a stone which lay in his path, he tripped against it, lost his equilibrium, and measured his length on the ground. He arose in a minute; but the shock had been enough to dislodge the recollection of his commission. Scratching his head, he tried to recall the words; but there was no clue to the dark and dismal labyrinth within. Everything there was at random; but a shake of the mental kaleidoscope brought a new formation to life, and 'pitch and rosin' were the two words that suggested themselves. These he continued to repeat as industriously as he had done the others, until he entered the grocer's shop, where he muttered, by way of explanation, 'Mammy—hog's pudding—pitch and rosin.' The grocer, with marvellous perception of matter-of-fact, and knowing the freaks of poor Thady's fancy, guessed what he wanted, and sent back the articles at hap-hazard. In a short time after, the priest's shepherd was about to mark his fleecy flock, and he desired Thady to go to the same shop, in search of pitch and rosin for this operation. And sure enough Thady trotted off, repeating the two words. Having met a person who detained him a moment on the road in conversation, he of course forgot them, and by the occult trickeries of idiot association he now began, 'Pepper and allspice! pepper and allspice!' which he demanded at the shop, in conjunction with some imperfect mention of priest's sheep. And here, again, his mistake was rectified by the intelligent shopman, who sent back the requisite materials; but so completely was the confusion of hogs and sheep established in poor Thady's cranium,

that from that day he could never comprehend the distinction between black puddings and mutton chops.

"The pigs of the priest aforesaid were one day driven forth by the housekeeper, faithfully assisted by Thady, and albeit unwilling to encounter liquid element, were, *nolentes volentes*, driven into the gently flowing Barrow. But one of the most rotund and sleek was selected by Madame Mère as a fit sacrifice to her cupidity, and she ordered Thady to keep its head under water, until suffocation ensued, telling him it was to make the pig sleep. In a short time after, Thady entered a cottage by the river's bank, and the good wife, having to prepare her husband's dinner, requested Thady to rock the cradle for her crying child. He obeyed her orders for some time, but finding the urchin inconveniently insomnolent, he ran to the mother, and, by a mixture of words and signs, contrived to tell her that he knew of a certain mode of making it quiet, which was to dip it in the river, and hold its head under water; 'and,' added he, with a knowing wink, 'salt it and eat it, salt it and eat it—like mammy and me, mammy and me, with the priest's pig, with the priest's pig.' This led to the discovery of the trick, and the theft practised by the housekeeper, who was in consequence discharged from the priory, and who ever after declared 'There was no one so 'cute as a fool!'"

But the town fools are widely different; there is little of "innocency" about them; besides the vacant air common to all genus, they had a peculiar tinge of quaint cunning, more or less displayed, a queer look, a half-open leer, a glance of business, and a share of downright covetousness. The author gives the following very interesting description of several town fools:—

"Brodigan, the pump-borer, had his leg broken and his skull cracked when a young man, and carried lameness, and that spurious sort of idiocy I have endeavoured to describe, far into middle life. He was an awful object to look at—squalid, hairy, and wild, with a vacant gaze of desperation, as if the memory of the fight still haunted, like a spectre, the ruins of the mind it had destroyed. He did nothing from morn to night but swagger up and down the middle of the street, throwing his curled leg out as if in defiance, growling and cursing, and brandishing a blackthorn stick over his head with one hand, while with the other he swept up the ragged tail of his loose great-coat which floated round him, his only rational words being, 'Five pound for a Tuomy! Tin pound for a Tuomy! Brodigan a-boo! Woop!' Every penny he received was immediately expended in whisky; but the great quantity he drank seemed to do him neither good nor harm."

"How Copper-nosed Jack acquired his nickname, I really do not know. The particular feature in question was an eagle-beak, and the eyes above it were of a glossy consistency; but they had no need to be transparent, as there was nothing to be seen within them. This was a biped of most extraordinary activity, a harmless fellow, who either had no more lungs than a fish, or as much as would have filled a church organ, for he could set off at full speed for Dublin, of a summer's morning, with a letter that required haste, and beating the mail to the capital (thirty-two Irish miles), bring back the answer the same night. This activity and industry showed nothing of absolute folly to a common observer, but a keen one could see it to be plainly such, when he

marked poor Jack's fellow-fools thrive even better than he did, in ample indulgence of sloth.

"Dancing Danny was a mere automaton, who comprehended but one word besides his own name, and if it were not spoken beside it, even that perhaps would have been beyond his capacity. Dance, Danny, was all his best friends ever said to him; and no sooner were the words said, than away he went, like a puppet on wires, but less naturally, pattering in the same spot with his splay feet, frowning at you all the while from a bushy pair of white brows, and matted hair falling thick over his face. His countenance never changed from its lubbery inexpressiveness. He held one hand out for the money. He would dance, as it was called, till he dropped, even until he felt the coin on his palm. Then, 'like mimosa at the touch of mortality,' he shrank into himself, wheeled away, and went off in whatever direction chance pointed to, till some fresh amateur called out 'Dance, Danny,' when he began again, and so worked away from dawn till dusk; nourished on whatever scraps were offered him, and going off to his father and mother, who lived in a cabin by the river's side; and who, drinking whisky to the full amount of Danny's receipts, drove him adrift again in the morning to earn his title to the next night's lodgings.

"Bill Woods was certainly intended by nature for a hero. He was a perfect block in point of feeling. All his tastes were military, and he delighted in destruction. He was of a good size, had tolerable features, and would have been good looking but for his air of folly. His teeth were brilliantly white, but his most disagreeable peculiarity was an everlasting chuckle and simper, which would have been an absolute

grin had he had understanding enough to enjoy a laugh. He had an undefinable look of feline cruelty, an air of human mousing, if it may be so expressed; was constant in his attendance on all the picketings, floggings, and executions. He always marched at the head of the yeomanry corps, dressed in a tattered military suit, with an old cocked hat streaming with faded orange ribbons, a huge cavalry sabre in his hand, and the iron scabbard trailing along the pavement about him. I have been told that wretches whose tortures he witnessed have declared that they 'could bear the cat-o'-nine-tails better nor Bill Wood's grin.'"

"Paddy Pass was a loathsome excrescence of nature. The wise purposes which gave him birth and allowed him to exist till old age, is far beyond my scrutiny or conjecture. He was aged when I saw him first; but his thick flaxen hair looked like boyhood. He had no sense to thin, nor no sorrow to blanch it. He was, nevertheless, as miserable in appearance, as if he had understood and felt his degradation. He seemed to have an instinct of filth in him. He preferred wallowing on a dunghill to sleeping on clean straw. If the parish beadle had not forced him to keep a rope well tied round his middle, the bundle of rags that covered him would have many a time walked away. He had a huge head and face, and a perpetual swelling on one side of it. He constantly muttered some unspeakable sounds from his twisted mouth, and shuffled along sideways from house to house, mumbling a demand for alms—an awful monument of human possibilities."

"Poor John King, whose portrait may form a relief to the others, was the most amiable and interesting of fools. He was a young man of middle size, regular features and dark complexion, and the expression of

his countenance was so unequivocally good, that he won one's sympathy and pity at once. The glazed look of timid kindliness which his face always wore, seemed to have been as it were frozen on it by some sudden chill, that had fixed, but could not ruffle the sentiment it had stolen—only surprise. Poor John King's story was a sad and painful one. Many persons used to take a pleasure in leading him on to tell it himself. This used to be done by a regular train of questions put by rule, and answered by rote; and when I call to mind the unmoved listlessness with which he performed his part of the colloquy, I am satisfied there was no wanton sporting with sensibility in putting him on his trial. He repeated his oft-rehearsed task as coldly as a trained witness, pocketed the donation of the curious or the charitable without another word, and walked away.

"However, in the infinite diversity of idiocy, there remains sometimes some feeling, though without a consciousness, as in the case of Godsham, 'having lost his mother by whom he had been reared in all the black indulgences of beggary, carried to her narrow bed, on every day for many months after her death, his snatched and scanty meal, and dividing it into equal parts, made holes in the turf and obtruded the food into them, that she might as when living partake with his repast. I have seen him, when the rain poured down in torrents, strip off his coat to cover the grave, and have heard him address the most affectionate complaints to her, whom he supposed to be listening to them, for her obstinacy in not speaking to him."*

* "The Master Passion," by *Thomas Colley Grattan.*

From idiots, who would not find water in the river, let us now turn our attention to half-crazed fools. *A half-crazed simpleton* will sometimes display some dexterity in the field-sports, has a good memory, and sometimes an ear for music, but he is incapable of any steady and constant exertion. He has got but just as much solidity as kept him on the windy side of insanity, as much wild wit as saved him from the imputation of idiocy. Such half-crazy idiots were seen, as late as the last century, in the houses of Scottish lairds, where they held the situation of a turnspit, and besides amused the nobleman by their wild wits, which they often flung around with the freedom of *Shakespeare's* licensed clowns, and there are few houses in Scotland of any note or antiquity, where the witty repartees and sayings of some such character are not occasionally quoted.

A tip-top fool.—The whole countenance of a tip-top fool betokens a very limited apprehension and dull faculties. It seems that his soul was never able to break through his callous nature, or find out some crevice to peep at the world. His low forehead, vacant face, his bleared eyes of stone, covered with fish scales, do not beam with any indication of feeling or passion, though he has sometimes the appearance of cogitating. His sheepish countenance is never lighted up by a ray of intellect. You can trace out no thought in his drowsy features. He is never known to have enjoyed a hearty laugh—his laughing is but its clumsy imitation. The laugh, an indication of the merriment starting up on a sudden in our mind, according to Aristotle, is distinguishing men from other animals, but our fool has not wit enough to understand a jest. Though staring at all he sees, he

has not capacity enough to be a great admirer of any particular object. He is staring at you with his filmy orbs, pricks up his ears, listens anxiously with a wide gazing mouth, but no signs of pleasure or eagerness mark his features. He hardly ever happened to comprehend anything more than his mother's cow, though he will sometimes smile, chime in, and nod acquiescence. The most plain notion, is with great difficulty, if ever, working its way into his obtuse brains. He has a very short memory, very feeble and discoloured associations, a heavy understanding, a benumbed organ of causation, and is quite deficient in the golden faculty of imagination. His gullibility and its pliancy is so great, that he will swallow down with a stoical indifference the most startling absurdity, the most monstrous assertion, the most arrant nonsense, the most obvious lie, the most plain fiction, and takes it all indistinctly for granted. He is equally capable of holding to be true, things the most contrary, notions of the greatest discrepancy. His conviction is like a reed blown about at the pleasure of every breeze. He seems to be convinced by the most preposterous argument, and is torpidly acquiescing in whatever he is told. However, no opinion, correct as well as erroneous, has any hold upon his mind. He assumes a quite contrary notion as easily as a new coat. Arguments, inferences, evidences, make but a very short and slight impression on his mind, and last no more than circles roused upon the glassed surface of a lake by dashing in a pebble. When it comes to any determination, he is held in suspense like the casuistical ass of *Sterne*, among two equalized bundles of hay.

But Providence has endowed him with many enviable advantages, as if willing to make up those great

deficiencies of his intellect. In the whole of his life he never had any anxiety or any aspirations, never has fallen short in his expectations, has never advanced or asserted any opinion, and had never any misgivings. If he wishes to be invisible, he has only to shut his eyes. The most cutting jokes make no more impression on his mind, than flakes of snow dropped upon a mountain stream. He is never in agony of a coming danger, though apparent to every man not deprived of his senses. Not only he is unable of perceiving the shadow of coming events, but even those events when touching his very nose. No hope so alluring and golden as will beguile him; he is quite free of all delusions, and not subjected to infatuation. The recollection of the past does not excite a sigh in his breast; the thought of things to come never generates in his obtuse mind any anxiety. He is satisfied and perfectly happy, except when hungry. He is not meddling, intruding, no bore in society, generally very tame-spirited, and, it must be confessed, "a happy dog."

A blinking idiot may be easily remarked and distinguished from other fools, by his widely-gaping mouth, and constant staring. His range of intellectual vision extends no further than his nose; in fact, he is superior to a tip-top fool only in this, that he has got wit enough to be a great admirer of anything that happens to lay in his way; besides, he is absolutely unable of acquiring knowledge. Though always among people of fashion, without being a looby, he, however, does not know how to carry himself in the world, he never is aware of having done something amiss, till warned. He is the very person mentioned by *Hierocles*, who, seeing a flock of birds on a tree,

shook it, and was mightily amazed to see them soar away upwards, instead of falling down like fruits.

In endeavouring to give our readers an adequate notion of stupidity, we mentioned, that it is the result of the debility of understanding, which implies weakness both of apprehension and of the reasoning faculty; but there are a great many fools owing a lively fancy, a buoyant imagination, and a retentive memory, which, besides many degrees in the weakness of perception and judgment, a neglected or careful education and training, society in which they were brought up, lived or mingled in their youth, are as many elements of the extreme diversity of shades in the hue of stupidity in all its Proteus forms, and the reason of the uncommon difficulty in enumerating its different kinds, and classing such an amazing number of fools, who at every new combination in the above-mentioned circumstances, are shifting and changing as totally and as often as spangles shaken in a kaleidoscope.

A superstitious fool.—His doleful features, horror-struck countenance, astonished looks, display the sensations of a man labouring under peculiar species of hallucination, believing himself beset on all hands by invisible agents, and accounting for every accident by the immediate effect of witchcraft. Men are generally curious of futurity, and would fain possess the power of foretelling what is to come. The flight of birds, and clusters of planets, have been, many centuries ago, devised as means of raising up the thick veil, which hides futurity from our eyes, and the office was confided to augurs and astrologers. *Pompey*, *Crassus*, and *Cæsar* consulted the Chaldeans, whose flattering predictions, so belied by their miserable fates, still brought not the fallacious science into disrepute.

Astrologers were ever proscribed, and ever remained at Rome. But this is one of the follies of human kind, which is returning every time the light of literature and sciences is extinguished or fettered, misled or adulterated, as was the case with Astrology which reigned in the middle ages, and in the reiterated middle ages of the seventeenth century entailed on the whole of Europe by the cunning of Jesuits. But to expatiate on this highly-interesting object is not the scope of our present work: we have not to deal here with the follies of mankind, which is the department of history, but with the folly of individuals; we return, then, to our task.

There is no denying that every man, even the greatest among the luminary, has some lingering remainings, a parcel superstition lurking in the secret recesses of his mind, which are dwarfing his intellect, and perverting all the operations of the intellectual faculties. This is *Lord Bacon's* idol, before whom we burn incense in secrecy, and at whose altar we depose our common sense in sacrifice; but this is done in privacy. One is ashamed of this, and unwilling to avow it even to his own conscience. This superstition lies isolated and veiled at the bottom of our mind, till roused by some circumstance in which our heart is deeply engaged. But superstitions of a fool are predominant in his mind, and are found interwoven and blended with all his notions and ideas. He is even proud of exhibiting his credulous spirit. He has recourse to some as unreasonable means as used by augurs and astrologers, and is firmly persuaded that they furnish him an unerring clue to futurity. He knows perfectly the way of extracting some omen from every occurrence, however trivial; even expe-

rience is unable to teach him not to confide in such fallacious indications of futurity. With a native taste for the supernatural, he seems to possess a diseased organ of causality. He puts an implicit faith to every thing he is told about sorcerers, conjurors, magicians, witchcraft, fascinations, incantations, spells, ghosts, night revellings of witches, the haunted houses and strange legends told only under the promise of secrecy and with an air of mystery. Besides, he has got his own way of prognostication, answering his limited curiosity: if he saw a coffin and a cross-bone in his dream, it is a sign of an approaching wedding; if his nose itched, he knows that he will drink wine, or kiss a fool. If a cat is whisking his skin, or a magpie sings, it betokens the impending arrival of visitors. To start on a voyage on Monday, to be in odd numbers at a dinner, are bad omens. A hare crossing the road, falling in with an empty pail, portend some evil. There are no less than sixty distinct methods of prying into the secrets of futurity, as we are assured by *Mr. Mackay*, in his *Memoir of Extraordinary Popular Delusions*. He has had besides the pleasure to see the flames of a burning treasure when passing a morass. Though he knows how to avert the influence of the evil eye and other ominous circumstances, he is rather apt of complaining that witches are no more burnt alive. Persons that do not share his superstition, are charitably rated as unbelievers, or, still worse, philosophers; philosophy being with him equivalent to atheism.

A gainsaying fool.—He has a knack of turning everything into discussion; you never advance a proposition, that he does not immediately bristle up. In the

mysterious mazes of his folly he has got an unexhausted supply of objections and misgivings, with which he never fails of attacking every, though most plain and incontrovertible, truth, or of taking the converse of every proposition that is started. Not initiated into the mysteries of dialectics, he is continually mistaking his exclamations for argument. His conversation always turns out to a controversial dispute, and is a continual warfare. This bias of an intellect thus inexhaustibly fertile of objections, seems to indicate that with some wit he might have turned sceptic; but on account of the weakness of his understanding, all his reasons are like two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff, and all his arguing and debating only render him a plague to men of sense or learning, whom he prefers controverting, and whom he is sure of picking up out of the thickest crowd of fools.

A questioning fool.—Idle curiosity is not, as it might seem on the first blush, his predominant passion, not from any necessity, but from a bad habit of long standing and a continual absence of mind, this fool is questioning incessantly, though he does not care to hear the answer, and is hardly able to understand it. Then his frequent questions are rather difficult to comprehend, and in most cases not worth comprehending. He has such unconquerable bent of inquiring, that in the very middle of a very interesting story, when all present await anxiously the impending solution, the most deep silence prevails in the room, he is sure of starting a very silly question, with great vociferation and evident self-satisfaction, and will not fail of broaching a new question, having not the slightest relation with the interesting and all-ab-

sorbing subject, and totally devoid of bearing upon the point at issue. Notwithstanding the evident discontent manifested by all present, he is quietly preparing himself to come forth with another question more silly, if possible, and being neither an objection nor the approval of the matter in question. It is then no wonder that his appearance causes a very disagreeable impression—discontent is spreading visibly on every face. There are no means within the rules of good breeding that are not resorted to, in order to get rid of so troublesome a visitor; you might cut a canal with almost half the labour, but the shrugging of shoulders, the turning up of whites of the eyes, are all to no purpose; the leaden shield of his stupidity being arrow-proof against the shafts of ridicule or innuendos. Happy he is, there is no denying, but a greater nuisance by far than a pewterer to his neighbours.

A learned fool.—What nature has lavished wantonly upon other fools, this he achieved by dint of hard and persevering labour, so that he may well boast of being a fool of his own making. Avoiding purposely the beaten road, he got into the mazes of exploded sciences, and thus has run to waste his limited capacities, and cramped himself by dwelling too long among one set of notions. He is exclusively occupied with mock sciences, as astrology, alchemy, magic, divination of all sorts, and the black art; is preparing *elixir vitæ*, has not given up the hope of seeing the philosophical stone lying flat at the bottom of his crucible, and was already on the point of transmuting a piece of silver into gold. Besides, he has made a happy discovery in metaphysics, having found the seat of the soul—so that he knows well where to look for it when wanted.

In order to be useful to the literary world, he sets about republishing the royal treatise "on the horns and tail of the devil," and has reprinted the interesting work of *Mader*, about the antediluvian books and libraries.* He is a diligent reader of *Cabala*, *More Nebuchim*, and *Mishnajos*. Is just engaged in writing a very taking book—a great desideratum in our literature—about the celebrated *Behemoth* and *Shorober*, as well as those interesting birds, *Ziz* and *Par-Juchne*, which the public is so anxious about. He hopes to live long enough to be able to finish his biography of *Martinus Scriblerus*, whose fame had been so unjustly bedimmed by that hunchback of a poet called *Alexander Pope*. According to his opinion, truth is never basking, but, like bats, is rather fond of the dark shadows of the night, hence everything obscure, or dimly seen, enigmas, allegories, quibbles, conundrums, every doctrine hovering between science and mysticism—everything bearing a mysterious appearance, or thickly veiled, or hidden under images and symbols —is sure of attracting and fixing his attention, and of engrossing his mind. He never fails of proclaiming, with a solemn sententiousness of manner, every obliterated notion for profound wisdom. According to his fancy, Asia not only was, but is now, the unremitting and inexhaustible fountain of the deepest philosophy, containing notions which the European philosophers never dreamt of. Seclusion has strengthened and petrified his delusions. It is difficult to find a person of greater perseverance in his varied pursuits, a person of more extensive learning; however, the pub-

* *De scriptis et bibliothecis antediluvianis.*

lic opinion has long ago set him down for a downright fool.

A coxcomb.—Every fool is, by instinct, anxious to hide his deficiency, though not distinctly aware of it, and would fain give himself the appearance of a man of sense and wit. Fools are generally assuming and presumptuous, but a coxcomb is unable to conceal the sense of his own extraordinary abilities, versatility of mind, superiority in all things, and over everything living or dead. He has got rolling eyes, an inflated nose, is quick in his movements, walks with agitated and uncertain gait, is always in a hurry, always strutting in trance and emotion, and, like my lord mayor's fool, full of business, and nothing to do. He never allows a moment to pass away without bursting forth in nonsense, and making at the same time a declaration "that he is no fool, and can see as far into a millstone as another man," after which he is apt to assume a dignified appearance, and drop now and then a significant monosyllable, so profound in its meaning that nobody can get at it. He never happens to say a dull thing in a quiet manner, but must needs utter every word of his inconceivable stupidity in an emphatic and arrogant accent; never condescends to laugh, but will smile disdainfully, will lengthen his lantern jaws, and vouchsafe to answer more with a nod or waving of the hand, than with word of mouth. But generally he is only shrugging up his shoulders, by which shrewd contrivance he means to pity the folly, limited faculties, crazy brains, and confused heads of his fellow-creatures. To prove his superior perspicuity and judgment, he often with a solemn sententiousness of manner, declares, that he resolved not to go into

the water till he had learned to swim. Though his intellectual powers are very low, he contrived to get the spice of all learning, and rates himself up to anything, be it as difficult of attainment, as foreign to his daily avocations and natural disability. It would be difficult to name any subject which had not engaged his close attention; there is no conceivable art, discipline or craft, however great, regarding which he would not put in a claim for the ability of doing it better than any one else. He will as easily start up as an orator in Parliament, as a painter, and, if need be, a sculptor. And such is his susceptibility for music, that he might easily match *Handel*, and compose something more graphic than *Beethoven's* SINFONIA PASTORALE; to prove it, he relates that delighting once his friends with his performance, he introduced an imitation of thunder so exquisite, that the cream for tea turned sour, besides three casks of beer in the cellar. In strategy he would match the late Iron Duke; in chemistry, *Sir Humphrey Davy*. He is at home on the turf, is well acquainted with all the mysteries of horsemanship, but above all, he has a native vocation for criticism, as he conceives the plummet of his understanding adequate to fathom the depth of the greatest genius. He promises to make a hundred and nineteen sermons on the hundred and nineteenth psalm by far more to the point than *Dr. Manton's*. Besides, he is very shortsighted in discovering the blunders and mistakes of great captains, admirals, and statesmen; he knows perfectly, and at a bound, how they should have acted—he would have displayed a longer reach in his policy; is sure of being able to have timed the business better, and would never fail to achieve success. He is equal to any of those employments, if he but

condescended to turn his talents to the use of the public. You are never capable of looking him out of countenance; you will never succeed in persuading him to give up any project of his—for every one of his dreams, every word he vouchsafes to utter is worth being cut and carved in stone or marble. Unwilling to lower the topsail of his elevated nature down to the water's edge, he is delighted with the idea of his unquestionable superiority, and to see about him nothing but dolts and frozen minds. In fact, he is the only high-minded and clever man existing. The world is standing on tip-toe to witness every display of his unequalled genius, and the sky must be raised one story to make way for his renown. Self-conceit, which is a flaw in the character of a great wit, is but ludicrous in a fool; however, it is an indication of temper or some undeveloped latent strength of mind or understanding, tame-spirited and sluggish minds having no propensity to be conceited and assuming.

A witling.—"I'll tell you a good thing," are the first words he utters upon entering the room. If a man of a humorous wit is a very desirable and delightful companion, there is nothing more loathsome than a witling, and his mean and uncouth attempts at wit. A witling is a prim pert prater, very fond of telling smart things and ludicrous stories, but he can never begin without laying a train for his joke, proclaiming beforehand and assuring the company that he has got something very ludicrous and pleasant to tell, or some extremely comical event to relate. Nor is he content with watching for, and torturing every occasion for his use, but will engross the whole conversation to make himself opportunity for wit, and bring us round to a jest by degrees; thus his cut and dry

joke, which is kept ready by him, is scented beforehand. Having roused expectation, before uttering some words more, he laughs himself out to his heart's content, and is almost unable to come out with it. After uttering some words, he cannot help laughing again. With such preliminaries he at last sets to work seriously, exerts himself to the very verge of his ability in order to render his story extremely ludicrous, overcharges his picture, making no scruple of entailing upon his hearers a great deal of his own imaginings; however, he soon has powerful reasons to be surprised that, notwithstanding his witticisms, which he laughed at most heartily, he could not even raise a smile, and though he has worn out his wit to the stump, nobody was laughing but himself. This made him stop short, and stare. Having made too visible preparation, which led his hearers to anticipate what was coming, appropriating other men's stories, pilfering other men's jokes, and exerting himself to his utmost in the display of his borrowed plumes, he was so cruelly bent upon giving vent to every new thought that suddenly popped into his head, that he omitted the very circumstance that made people laugh, and which might have roused the same feeling in his hearers. At last, such an untoward exhibition of his failure set the whole company in a roar. Not aware that the laugh does not run on his side, he sits down mightily satisfied, and never suspects people only wanted to show him that he was too great an ass to be listened to.

A puling and self-admiring fool.—As a witling is always laughing, so our fool with a doleful countenance is incessantly moaning, complaining, lamenting, wailing and whining in a piteous tone, that he is neglected, his worth is overseen, his just claims dis-

regarded, his hopes blighted. He is in continual rapture about his rare merits, excellent qualities, which, though they wholly engross his mind, men have the perverseness to leave unheeded. In order to better his circumstances, so much below his shining deserts, he is pushing every of his acquaintance to stand up in his defence, to espouse his interest, to interfere in his behalf, and so restless and unrelenting are his exertions that he sets all wheels agoing, and leaves no stone unturned till he has obtained the object so anxiously desired; but hardly has he seen the fulfilment of his wishes, when he sets anew on whining and complaining. Nothing in the world is capable of appeasing the irritability of his self-love and conceit, or discourage the over-estimation of his own merits. He is sticking fast to some good-minded and unsuspecting people, and employs them without scruple to all his egotistical intents and purposes; to meddling, intriguing, prying into one's neighbour's concerns, only to find an occasion for gratifying his self-love, and get some shadow of pretext for complaining. He is very fond of bad stories and tales, and is even capable of keeping a friend who is likely to furnish him with them, and this in the hope of finding some reason, just or specious, to whimper and whine. Very fond of flattery, he will sometimes—but this is rather of a rare occurrence—bethink himself of gratifying others with a bit of praise; now and then, he would suffer extorted and sparing commendation to burst open his lips, but then you see his silly face quite distorted, for half of it is whining, whereas another half is lighted up with a smile of self-complacency. This shocking propensity of over-rating one's own merits, a consequence of the unchecked self-

love, is common to all fools, but the singularity of our fool is its singleness; as he not only is never aware of the merits of others, or of a flaw in his own character, but sees nothing beyond his own neglected merit. His querulous temper is the result of pretensions which outgo the merits by which they are supported. His constant disappointments may be traced not to excess of his powers or gifts, but to their absence. In general a tendency to sentimental whining and querulousness may be ranked amongst the surest symptoms of little souls and inferior intellects.

A smoothy-mannered fool.—Fools are always ready to bristle up, but it is sheer impossibility to offend a smoothy-mannered fool or take a rise out of him; he is of that medium tint which seems to harmonise with everybody, as every of his features is effaced, every salient point rounded and smoothed into the most level monotony; hence it comes that the sarcasms of the facetious, delicate and genteel raillery, ironical compliments, as well as whole quires of ridicule, even a biting pleasantry and a home-jest, fall on him like arrows rebounding from the scales of Behemoth, never troubling the constant serenity of his mind. He is as arrow-proof against the shafts of ridicule as the mail of a crusader, and takes indiscriminately every word you utter for a compliment, and will thank you most graciously, having always about him for that purpose some dry and cut phrases, which dovetail so nicely into every case, that nothing appears to him more appropriate and spontaneous, though is often strangely misapplied. Except on such occasions, he is generally very reserved and silent, strives to look as wise as the bird of wisdom; like *Swift's* wise man, he is never contradicting or differing in opinion from those pre-

sent. Being the best listener in the world, an embodied affirmative, he willingly approves with a smile, a chuckle, and a nod everything that is told. However, this forbearance is not generated in the kindness of his heart, but is the offspring of his stupidity. Inured from infancy to the correct manners of high life, he is a perfect nonentity, a chameleon that takes the colours of the nearest object. Besides, he generally holds his tongue till asked a question, and then his native dulness, carefully veiled and varnished over with fine manners, is obliged to come forth, and never fails of becoming an egregious display of ignorance and obtuseness of mind. He is a dangler of wit, spends his time in humbly admiring, and is happy in being permitted to attend and gratify the insatiate vanity of professed wits. Thus he goes on leading a sort of slipshod existence, doing nothing, yet mightily interested in what others do; peering through the windows of *Crockford's*, as if anxious to discover the twenty-sixth planet of our solar system, and much excited about things with which he has no concern, and about personages who never heard of him.

An habitual liar.—The lie is not only to be accounted for by a careless education, bad example, native falsehood, wretchedness or wicked propensities, as in that case we would have less lies running the world; a great half of lies, mis-statements, exaggerations, is generated in the imbecility of the mind, dulness of apprehension, preconceived notions, and disturbed faculties, especially when fancy has got the mastery of all other faculties. *Lord Bacon* says, that "a mixture of lies does ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt that, if there were taken from men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imagina-

tions as one would say, and the like *vinum dæmonum*, as a father calls poetry, but it would leave the mind of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves?" The lies of a fool are generally inoffensive; but we must not examine closely his statements, nor hold them for truths. The moment you contradict a lying fool, even on the least appearance of incredulity he is excited to upholding one lie by another, that would make a parson swear, or compelled to argumentation, the weakest part of his intellectual abilities, and thus you change unconsciously his inoffensive lying into a downright falsehood. It is more advisable to let him to lie out his whole store, and he will never try to cheat you. This efflorescent talker likes to carry about news, particularly those which he has invented or inverted. A lie wont choke him, he will tell as many lies as will fill a bushel, without faltering; lies seem to be native fruits of his mind, they spring forth unwittingly, as he cannot help adding something of his own and magnifying everything he happens to talk of. He is unconsciously exaggerating, colouring, glossing over, if he does not absolutely invent; but then he is never capable of repeating one thing twice over in the same manner. Perceiving on the face of his hearers some standing doubts or misgivings about his statements, he thinks himself obliged to add, that he was an eye-witness, and so he gives out to be in every false story he is making. By telling fibs he gets himself so entangled in his own imaginings, as to be himself deluded and rendered incapable of discerning his own fibs from truth; and his imagination is so fertile that he actually believes fictions, which he delighted in telling. Lies are the poetry of a

fool; with some more sense, some more sound judgment he might have turned a poetaster; but with the imbecility and dulness of his faculties, led astray by his lively fancy, he must be satisfied with telling false stories and fibs, in which he finds as agreeable an exercise of his puny poetical faculties, as much delight and pleasure, as were ever experienced by *Milton* in the flights of his vast imagination.

But leaving fools for awhile, even among men of high parts and eminent position, we meet with a thing called "a white lie;" besides, travellers are said to enjoy the privilege of lying with impunity, and it is supposed that they always have a shade of *Sir John Mandeville* about them. *Sir Henry Wotton*, who had a practical acquaintance with the duties of the diplomatic office, gives the following definition of an ambassador:—"He is a clever man, sent abroad to lie for his country." We must be allowed to mention in this place a historical person, *Tyrconnel*, long known by the nickname of lying Dick Talbot, who was remarkable by the shameless volubility with which he uttered falsehoods, and with whom mendacity was almost a disease.

A giddy-brained fool.—We have seen that fancy, overpowering other weak faculties of a fool, made him a liar, but here is an instance of the influence of a retentive memory upon a fool. In his youth he roused a brilliant hope, which, when in manhood, proved to be a failure. His constant wish is to appear a man of great wit, but unable to comprehend and judge by himself, doing all his thinking by proxy, he is but an echo reflecting slavishly the opinions of others. Having picked up some shewy sentences of deep philosophy or acute observation,

when poaching in the fields of literature, he exhibits everywhere his fresh acquisition, giving it out for his own, and thus imposing upon persons that do not know him intimately. But all his wit is lying in his memory. He does not like baring his intimate feelings to the world; is very shy and fidgety in presence of men that have the habit of scrutinising every started assertion, having an instinct abhorrence of close examination, which might betray his innate stupidity and ignorance hidden under those borrowed sentences, pregnant thoughts and weighty maxims. However, he never fails of betraying himself by some blunders in argument, the weak side of every fool. Not content of putting on an appearance of a clever man and acute observer of running times, he would fain make a show of his pretended wit. Is very sociable and everywhere to be met with, but like a butterfly never rests long upon the same flower. However, he is never boasting and bragging, but is craving of compliments, however gross. A mere weathercock, his giddiness is visible in his whole bearing, in every of his steps, in speech, and in the whole of his life.

A half-wit.—Of all species of fools, sketched out on the preceding pages, this is the most remarkable, being of a most whimsical cast of mind, and of a peculiar mental conformation. At first blush, one is rather inclined to suppose him to be endowed with two minds, domiciliated in one body; for he is displaying a great dulness and considerable acuteness, by turns. His intellect is continually changing its hue like an opal. With stupidity stamped on his countenance, he is always distracted, especially in conversation, and continually in a laughing fit, a sign of an interior and

enviable happiness common to all fools. Notwithstanding his speaking nonsense every day of his life, in the middle of his cock-and-bull stories and rigmaroles, occasional flashes of intellect, sparks of genuine wit and chastened humour, of sprightly fancy, will burst forth when less expected; he will drop, as if by chance, a comic observation, closed in a metaphor, which raises a general laughter, whereas the quiet indifference and unmoved features betoken that he does it unconsciously, without any wish of making a display of wit. Sometimes he will come forth with a keen observation about events or men, which give a more correct judgment of their worth—for he but seldom chooses to dwell on their failings—than the most worldly, knowing, or clever, though he is always abstracted, and seems not to be aware of what is going on in his presence, or of having had any opportunity for observation. His intellect, like the intermittent fountain of *Pliny* on the lake of Como, has the power to escape occasionally its opaque confinement, will issue by fits and starts from the bottom of his soul, and peeping forth into the world, but for a short moment, like the dumb son of *Crœsus*, notices these things which, in the ordinary course of nature, seem to be quite unable to attract his attention; as if a sudden light had broke in upon him, he throws out a careless observation, or remarks a circumstance which had escaped the observation of the acutest observer. Sometimes people are inclined to suppose he is only mimicking a fool to impose upon, but his stupidity, connected with an habitual absence of mind, if at times invisible in his conversation, is but too obvious in his conduct. Unable of discovering the sound part of his mind, you must forego the hope of schooling him,

teaching him wit, or anything whatever, but he will learn by himself anything that happened to engross his attention, and is not interwoven with any nice arguments. Then he is very kind-hearted, unassuming, and has not the slightest conceit about him. Spreading merriment and hilarity by his hearty laugh, though the most part unaccountable, he often startles you with the sagacity of his remarks amidst a very common-place conversation, puzzles you with unexpected flashes of his wit, which is suddenly popping out upon us, and has such exhilarating property, as a ray of sunlight darting through some crevice of a prisoner's cell; then he has such a knack of softening your heart, that it is almost impossible not to like him.

A simpleton and a ninny-hammer.—He is lowly, sober, quiet and kind-hearted; in his singleness of heart and intention he believes well of the human nature, puts a blind trust in the integrity of others, and is deceived more deeply in proportion of his confidence and kindness. With him a brick is quite enough to convey a just notion of a house. His mind is utterly destitute of tone, quite incapable of independent thought and earnest preference, ready to take impressions and as ready to lose them. However, he resembles fools only by his credulity and implicit reliance on the opinion of others, and differs from men of common sense only, by a total lack of circumspection, prudence, and shrewdness. A simpleton never rouses suspicion, and enjoys the enviable privilege of never calling forth the jealousy of mediocrity. Not very useful to society, except in his own very limited circle, but no bore, never intruding or meddling. His life flows down gently, like the stream

of a quiet river. He usually goes by the name of a good-natured fellow; only his want of polished manners is sometimes complained of; for he seems often to forget that, as *Lady Montague* says, "in that mortal state of imperfection fig-leaves are as necessary for our minds as our bodies, and that it is as indecent to show all we think, as all we have." A *ninny-hammer* has such a contracted power of understanding, as is incapable of combination; like the simpleton, he displays no prudence, no foresight, but excels the latter in candour, kindness of heart, in uncontaminated innocence and purity of soul. He is not guilty of any bad action because of its being a sin, but that he is quite ignorant of the existence of bad. He has got that sweet trustfulness, which never permits suspicion to mix with doubt; is not completely bereaved of common sense, but his reason is gliding upon the surface: he believes willingly what may be identified by his very limited powers of intellect, but however has always more confidence in the evidence of his senses, than in any argument; he will, for instance, never believe that the sun is not setting, or that a stick put in limpid water is not broken. Shutting his eyes, he is sure of being invisible; seeing the leaves falling down, he only thinks "winter is coming." His cosmogony goes only to the elephant. He is never suffering pungent griefs, but enjoys no great pleasure; is rarely thinking of times to come, and never of those gone by. He is never suspecting the righteousness, sincerity, and candour of others. The Roman emperor, *Trajan*, is said to have been very partial to such characters. *Simpliciora ingenia magis diligebat.*

The fanatic.—He was not born to be a fool; his

faculties, certainly none of the first-rate, were befogged by prejudices and superstitions, by exaggerated notions in religion, inculcated in his mind from the very childhood, and fostered by bad example, weakness, fear, melancholy, together with ignorance. His imagination is inflamed by mystery. His infatuated mind inspires itself with its own whimsies; is groping in darkness, which the feeble ray of his intellect is unable to pierce through. His inveterated prejudices, interwoven with religious notions, had benumbed his faculties and rendered them unable to regain their lost elasticity. A benighted man, petrified in obstinate prejudices, is stubborn in his notions, and given to fanaticism; he will prefer believing the greatest absurdity, while akin to his prejudices, than acquiescing in the plainest truth, for which he seems to feel the deepest horror. His reason having no mastery over his gloomy imagination, does not check his bad propensities. Fanaticism is, however, not unfrequently united with great and even good qualities of mind; and this, the most dangerous shape of it, is exquisitely portrayed in *Voltaire's* Merope.

CHAPTER V.

DEFICIENCIES, FAILINGS, AND BIAS OF WIT AND UNDERSTANDING.

A poor genius.—A puny wit.—A pedant.—Professors exposed to become pedants.—A poet inspired by books.—Chatterton.—A poetaster.—A provincial bard.—A low wit, a punster, a quibbler and a riddle-maker.—Penny-a-liner.—A libeller.—An understanding with but one window.—A shallow wit.—A dim understanding.—A muddle-headed man.—Three mental deficiencies of literary men.—A person with a marvellous memory.—An intellect deprived of memory.—An absent man.—A button-holder.—A cross-grained wit.—A strange genius.—A slow wit.—A sly and crafty person.—A sophist.—Mental bias of a lovesick person.

A POOR GENIUS. — He is but one remove from stupidity, and hence often confounded with fools. Some sense, a bit of reason, a smattering of learning, slender wit, lumpish imagination, second-rate capacity, blended with presumption and vanity, is the character of *a poor genius*. All his thoughts and imaginings bear the tint of that commonplace sense which every one can write, and no one can deny. His compositions, where ordinary subjects are treated with an ordinary style, and with ordinary ability, are too dull to be commended, and too accurate to be condemned; there is no drawing forth from them food either for reason or for ridicule. Unable of compre-

hending deep argumentation or elevating his mind, the poor genius is only gliding over the surface of things. Whatever he sees is dwarfed, and distorted by a false medium of his short-sightedness, and the more strictly he reasons on his premises the more absurd are the conclusions which he brings out. He is awkward or listless in distinguishing the known from the doubtful; what has been proved, from what is only probable. When put to weighing probabilities his mind gets perplexed, and is easily discouraged; then he has a peculiar proneness of availing himself of principles sanctioned by some imposing names, and anxiously avoids all discussion which might involve a rigorous analysis of his ideas, or lead to an examination of ultimate truths. He has a very scanty vocabulary at his command, and his language is of a vague and uncertain import.

A poor genius, though not exactly stupid, has yet many things in common with dunces: he is as narrow-minded, as susceptible of envious feelings, as prone to censure and to begrudge virtue the admiration which it has justly earned, has no indulgence to the faults and failings of others, and evinces a great aversion to every superiority in wit or capacity. Unable to expand even to the full apprehension of that excellence with which superior natures are gifted, or which they have by culture attained, he would fain pull down and lower every one to his own standard of mental mediocrity, and by carping at some trifling slips made in less weighty matters, put them on his own level. Too clever by half, is a frequent phrase of mediocrity sneakingly conscious of being silly. A poor genius is a confirmed enemy of budding abilities and promising talents, as if he kept

from nature the exclusive monopoly of wit and abilities. Wise in his own conceit, he is the fly in the fable, who getting upon a wheel which makes dust, takes it all for his own raising, and he belongs to that sort of persons of whom *Oliver Goldsmith* says, that "had they been bred cobblers, would all their lives have only mended shoes, but never made them."

A puny wit.—The expanse of his wit may be summed up in a nutshell. His intellect seems to be fitted up with a microscope, in which an atom is swelled into a monster; in fact, he is chartered monsterer of nothings, is constantly confounding little things with great ones, is never aware of the last, and is penny wise and pound foolish. When called upon, or rather uncalled, to give his opinion upon a book, he is sure to be more offended by a mistake in punctuation or a blunder in spelling, than with a total want of sense and logic; he is more shocked at the least deviation from propriety, at an inverted collar or rotten button, than at the want of respectability of character or a bad reputation.

A puny wit is always united with great vanity, which makes him exceedingly satisfied and happy with himself. By reducing great characters, which happened to offend his diminutive intellect, to his own low standard of worth, he is sure of having found an unerring method of becoming conspicuous, acquiring fame, and dazzling mankind with his merit and genius.

Puny wits endowed with dwarfish talents are generally laborious and patient, but their pursuits are not unlike the exertions of an ant carrying up to its burrow a quarter of a fly or the thigh of a gnat. They are seen to weigh their poor conceptions on a

scale hanging on strings of cobweb, and polish their style with the care and anxiousness of a *coquette;* but their performances are a heap of small things seen through a microscope of a small mind, and their arguments are so frail as not to bear the handling of a more enlarged understanding.

A pedant.—Professors exposed to turn out pedants.

"In error obstinate, in wrangling loud,
For trifles eager, positive and proud;
Deep in the darkness of dull authors bred,
With all their refuse lumbered in his head."

MALLET.

A small wit crammed with book learning, generally turns out a *pedant*, so called, because he is always proceeding, *pedatim*, step by step. Unacquainted with the world and its exigencies, he is constantly confounding the youth with the age of the human species, constantly taking trifles for serious matter, making even small things ponderous; his intellect is remarkable by its want of a perspective, like Chinese pictures. He gives no relief to his work. Awkwardly ostentatious of his learning, he is much given to close reasoning upon the smallest matter; pacing cautiously, sticking conscientiously to the method of school-logics, he is but a word-catcher that lives on syllables, and a prier without being a diver.

Having some propensities of a systematical wit, he is generalizing very slowly; though always positive, he is not likely to commit striking blunders in his limited sphere of mental exertions; but his labours come to nothing. He is mistaking strange things for strong ones. His wit is stiff, strained, and like the gamboling of an elephant, unwieldy and clumsy.

He prefers boring in books than looking into the face of nature, and when he happens to turn his attention that way, he sees nature through the medium of the classics, and not with the naked eye, and expects to see more by the light of his dim lantern, than by the brightness of the sun.

Shut up in his books, like a snail in his shell, a pedant despises the present as an innovation, and is unable to perceive the shadow of coming events. Looking only backwards, he puts a great value only on that which is past and gone. He has a great veneration for words that are stricken in years and are grown so aged, that they outlived their employment, and displays infinite grammatical scrupulosities in the use of the subjunctive mood. He cares naught for the present bent and exigencies of the world, nor the present tendencies of literature. He walks a stranger to the living generation, like a ghost of former times. Is never debating or conversing, but always teaching and speaking in a dogmatical strain, bringing forth no evidence and making distinctions without a difference. Instead of arguments, he is alleging and quoting ancient poets—without making any discrimination, even the art of making love of *Ovidius*—preferring poets to all prose writers, though he has not a spark of poetry in him. Is very fond of etymology, and likes to draw his arguments out of it. He turns everything into discussion, making use of overstrained expressions, and a correct, but stiff language. Not aware that superfluity sickens, surfeits and weakens the effect, he displays much prolixity, unnecessary minuteness and pompous disquisition respecting matters of very little or no importance; wholly deficient in taste, sound judgment, and the large circumspec-

tion, which enables men to weigh the relative value of either reasons or facts, confounding stiffness with correctness—he is discursive, long-winded, heavy and tiresome to the very verge of not being readable; he connects words rather than thoughts, and is fond of descanting and expatiating upon matters more than indifferent to those present. He knows every minute circumstance and every particular of events, (and on this he is pluming himself greatly,) which are of no use whatever to a man of sense, which cannot engage the interest of an enlightened person, nor attract the attention of the learned. But if by chance he happens to elicit something like truth, he forthwith wraps it up in scientific (Greek if possible) terms; surrounds it carefully with a Chinese wall, and instead of bringing it into life, folds it up in a shroud of confused expressions, lays it on with varnish, embroiders it over with hieroglyphics, and is not satisfied till he has turned the truth into a riddle.

A pedant prefers notoriety to fame, is always morose, capable of considering every sally of wit as a levity of character, and scorn it out of countenance. Men of the world, notwithstanding his presumption and ostentatious learning, set him down as an uncontrovertible evidence, that learning without sense is of no avail.

When charged with the education of a youth of great parts, he is under the tribulation and anxieties of a hen who has hatched ducks and sees them swim. He would fain turn his thoughts into his own narrow channel, that they might not flow, but ooze out. He never exerts himself in raising up his mind, but is always keeping him down and sobering. He is confident of being able to make the young eagle stock,

instead of soaring, and to prevent him from moving onward in the curve of his own devising. He is daily exploding his enthusiasm, every stronger feeling of his mind, the flight of his genius, and considers it almost as a crime of deep dye. He would fain flog him into a pedant, as *Buchanan* did with *James of Scotland.* He is endeavouring to stifle in its bud every excellence of his mind, which is above his own standard of perfection, and by not allowing his abilities a free play during growth, by a severe repression of its young activity, he would certainly have stunned and crippled them, if—happily for the youth, nature did not slip out of his clumsy hands. Not able to put out the vivid flame of his genius, his only comfort is to portend no good of his sense and reason, and even throwing some doubts upon his character.

The dogmatical turn of mind exhibited by pedants is generated in schools along with the barbarity of style and scholastic philosophy. A professor is obliged to be positive and dogmatical; he must needs glide over all objections and doubts, which cling to every truth, and like rust are corroding the brightness of its surface; otherwise, instead of imparting to his students some clear notions; instead of acquainting them with some primary principles or main facts of any science, he would only puzzle their brains and confuse their minds. The historical method would be more clear and interesting for students, but is too long, and presents many other inconveniences. In teaching, for instance, chemistry by this method, a young student would have to occupy his attention with the philosophical stone, before he has acquired any notion of oxygen and hydrogen. Sceptical method would be still more difficult for young adepts,

being not easy even for men of a mature understanding, great proficiency and experience; hence a professor is of necessity obliged to be dogmatical, but with time and unawares he gets accustomed to frame his thoughts in such a shape, by and by he is dogmatical even in familiar conversation, and thus unconsciously turns out a pedant. The same lamentable fate awaits wealthy persons pretending to wit, but surrounded by dependents of common capacities, as if by the echos of their own thoughts, who, flattered by convincing uniformity of sentiment, and seeing their superiority over their daily hearers, acquire a dogmatical way of speaking, and turn out pedants, though they may never have seen Eton, but from the terraces of Windsor.

A poet inspired by books.—In a certain period of advanced civilization, persons with poetical temperament are often tempted to swerve from the main road leading to excellence in poetry; instead of taking their inspiration from nature, of looking at her face, instead of studying closely her beauties and shiftings, of nourishing and storing with them their imaginative memory, they turn from nature to books, and imitate nature only as she is reflected in books.

At the outset, the ideas drawn from books are few and faint, but with time they become absolutely necessary to set them a thinking The colouring of nature grows to them fainter and fainter; their mind becomes more and more unable to seize it; the past or the distant, seen through the medium of books, acquires daily more vividness and becomes at last almost their only reality. By dint of the immense extent of their reading, the tone of sentiment, and even the language of their favourite authors, is amalgamated with their

own, which they adopt and dovetail into their works. Hence it comes, that their inspiration is redolent of books, from which they derive their matter, and colour it with borrowed tints. There is in their performances not one trait drawn from actual life, or being the result of their immediate observation. Their compositions are remarkable by some of that artifice, which is inevitable in copies taken, not from nature, but from pictures; and though the costume may be picturesquely accurate, the thoughts noble, the characters ably touched, their persons, though looking life-like, neither breathe nor move; even their very grace and nature have a second-hand air.

It is an unerring sign of some latent deficiency in their poetical genius; generally they are lacking strong poetical feeling, have none of that dramatic power which can create characters, and the texture of their genius is such, as to admit easily of a blending with the currents which it is constantly receiving.

Chatterton is the most striking and curious instance of a precocious poetical genius stunned and marred by his ruling passion, an "unconquerable pride," and by his having cast off the restraints of religion in the very dawn of life, for he committed suicide when but seventeen years old. Not only his ingenuity, industry, and perseverance in the acquisition of the astonishing skill in "antique lore," but, what is of a rare occurrence, even his poetical powers were misused and wasted in producing antiquated poems which, stimulated by his favourite ambition of imposing upon the literary world, he ascribed to *Rowley*, a monk of the fifteenth century, and was contented with the solitary contemplation of his superiority over the dupes who fell in his toils. Thus two moral deficiencies—want

of religion and want of Christian humility—reduced a native poet to an ingenious impostor.

A poetaster.—It is one of those bards of mediocrity, a kind of *Richard Flecknoe*, whom no critic could ever whip out of the poetical parish; but who, by dint of pleonasm and expletive, can find smoothy lines, if any one will supply him with ideas.

> "Dashing through thick or thin,
> Through sense and nonsense, never out nor in;
> Free from all meaning, whether good or bad."

His own unchecked propensity to rhyming, and the flattering opinion of his early friends, who were mistaking his facility in versifying, and his animal spirits for genius, made him a ready stringer together of verse. But he has in him none of the elements of poetry; he has not a poet's vein, but a scribbling's itch; all the nervous contortions of a sybil, without her inspiration; an excessive sensibility of temper, without plasticity. His imagination, like the wings of an ostrich, enables him to run, but not to soar. Unable to produce correct representations of human nature, he is daubing monstrous chimeras, and seems not to know that proportion forms an essential attribute of truth, and consequently of verisimilitude. His tame conceptions are no otherwise poetical than that the muses are occasionally mentioned. His path is far from being attended by an unapproachable mirage of excellence, for ever receding and for ever pursued. He is taking lofty flies upon mean occasion. He has a head too dull to discriminate the true from the false, and a heart too callous to love the one and to hate the other; unable to read his own consciousness without mistake, he seems to write not from sight

or experience, but from hearsay, and is always mistaking mere exaggeration and violence for force and sensibility. His poetical creations are caricatures of affected simplicity, display nothing but vulgarity, silliness and childishness, and like the representations of a monster, are at first only surprising, but ludicrous and disgusting ever after; or, if by chance he hits upon a lofty conception, he never fails to set all wheels a-going, in order to associate it with some low, silly, or uninteresting object or incident, as if bent to make it look a parody. The figures and comparisons he introduces do not elevate or adorn that which they are brought to illustrate. His poetry is full of mean incidents, incongruous images, false glitter and bombast, or affectation of singularity or rudeness; his pictures are gaudy, overdone, and fantastically contrasted. His landscapes remind us of the old-fashioned Italian shell-work. He is equally unhappy in his delineations of persons: his virtuous personages lisp like sucklings, and his unamiable characters are such a sort of monsters, as nurses imagine to frighten naughty boys into obedience. You stumble but on morbid exaltation of character and feeling, on fabulous woes or impossible joys, hollow sentimentalities, wire-drawn refinings in thought and feeling, or fictitious sorrows conjured up for poetical effect. His language is either coarse or inelegant, or by his foolish vanity of running after ornaments he sacrifices simplicity and nature to far-fetched conceits, sobriety and chasteness in the colouring to glitter and glare, clearness and perspicuity in language to forced and fantastical words. His style is not only stiff, but strained and twisted and encumbered with heavy expletives; or he is given to ostentatious polishing of pretty expressions,

and is straining all his powers to keep up a high flown inflated tone, the stilting emphasis of which contrasts ill with the tameness and flatness of his conceptions; or his diction is slovenly, a tissue of torpid, sententious, wearisome and unimpassioned declamation; or, he has recourse to a mere accumulation of hyperbolical expressions, which encumber the diction without exalting it, and only show the intention and determination to be impressive, without the power of carrying it out. His imitations are distorted by the aberrations of a vulgar and vitiated taste. Dealing in borrowed and tawdry wares, he is only ringing changes on the commonplaces of Magazine versification. His poetical creations do not present to us likenesses, but awkward caricatures, or are displaying a mass of verbose puerility, babyish incident, or fantastical sensibilities. There is, however, scarcely any part of his poetry to which the imagination has contributed; all is produced, not by creation, but construction. Perpetual artifice and effort, a determination to miss no opportunity of being striking, are everywhere visible; and, moreover, he appears to be greatly averse to throw away even the rubbish and parings of his imagination; hence it comes that you vainly look in his poetry for a selection of images and thoughts, which his reading or reflection had once suggested to his imagination, for you find all diluted with a flood of oppressive verbosity, and worked up with the same fond and indiscriminate anxiety.

His perpetual pursuit of poetry, unabated by many failures, involved him in perpetual illusion; you see a smile of self-complacency on his countenance when he is writing, and a tear of disappointment when he had published. Notwithstanding his golden prospects and

high aspirations, he is only discovered in his profound obscurity by the piteous cries he sometimes utters, and dies amid the ravings of his immortality in the cheering hope that posterity will not fail to make pilgrimages to his birth-place or his grave, if not the dwellings where he had composed his multifarious *poeshie*, as spots hallowed by poetical associations.

A provincial bard.—From the habit of comparing himself with his contracted circle, he has formed an exaggerated opinion of his own genius. Haunted by the desire of poetical celebrity, his heated imagination sees in the metropolis that fame and fortune denied him in his native town; here baffled of the hope of being appointed a city-poet, and to figure as a laureat in the annual pageant of Lord Mayor, he became half-hermit, and half philosopher, darting epigrams which provoked hatred, or pouring elegies which stimulated derision, his neighbours finding it much easier to ascertain his foibles, than comprehend his genius; at last, drawing his inspiration from the hour, he became a poet of a booth at Bartholomew-fair, wrote plays for the puppet-shows of Smithfield, and composed drolls. Reduced at last to hiss at his own dragon, and to wag a serpent-tail in Smithfield-fair, he finished with becoming a bagger in rhyme.

Low wit, or a punster, a quibbler, and a riddle-maker.—We have here to deal with diminutive forms of wit, or *low wit.* Of all deficiencies of the human mind this is the most loathsome; for we bear more easily with a commonplace morality, than with a trite or commonplace wit. In Elizabeth's reign, *John Lilly*, "the only rare poet of that time, the witty, comical, facetiously quick and unparalleled," for so he is called in the title-page of his plays, published the book "*Euphues* and

his England, or the Anatomy of Wit," which quality he makes to consist in the indulgence of every monstrous and overstrained conceit, that can be engendered by a strong memory and a heated brain, applied to the absurd purpose of hatching unnatural conceits. *False wit*, the substitution of strange and unexpected connexions of sound or of idea, for real humour, pervaded the most admired poetry of *Elizabeth's* times. *James of Scotland*, the learned and sapient, was a first-rate punster, and used to pride himself on punning and quibbling as much as on his pretended king-craft.

The wit of language is very inferior to that of ideas. Punning, a wit of words, a wit of very low order, is generated by the peculiar taste for twisting and playing upon words, instead of applying them to their natural and proper use. The business of the punster is to pick out and yoke together two words which, while they have some resemblance in sound, convey a totally different signification; such different explications of a word present an odd or a ludicrous idea. Riddle-makers display wit in hiding their meanings, and exercising the ingenuity of those that volunteer to find them out.

Penny-a-liner.—The genius of a penny-a-liner, living on the circumstances and necessities of the day, is never called into exercise but for the occasion and for bread. He is always in the pursuit of the grand, uncommon, of what looks striking rather than just. Straining after effect rather than truth, he is always endeavouring to say something out of the ordinary way, substituting the glare of words for harmonious ideas. Labouring to look big, he tries to pass off tinsel for sterling metal; fine sounding phrases for distinct and valuable ideas; vague, flimsy, shadowy,

half-pursued, half-formed ideas, for deep thoughts; and to make them look magnified, he is anxiously raising round them a mist of pompous words, which is like the transparent haze through which sailors see capes and mountains of false sizes and false bearings. Making sometimes a vast noise, nobody can tell why or what he is writing about, never coming to the point; and of this eternal labour and sonorous language, from all the heavings of the mountains, there comes out nothing or little.

Endowed but with a moderate share of common-place abilities to be brought to bear upon his literary career, or perhaps lacking any other occasion to display his talents, or having either no patience or means of abiding his time, he turned penny-a-liner, who is to supply, in a very limited time, periodicals with a lot of brilliant and striking articles, for the daily amusement and excitement of the reading public, whose appetite is getting depraved by being jaded.

But such habits of thought, the daily indulgence in loose reasoning, are the ruin of great faculties, which they finish by blunting and stunning, and smother the last sparkle of a moderate share of capacity.

A libeller.—This is the most striking display of the deleterious influence of low and mean passions upon our mental faculties, the worst example of the misuse and desecration of those talents of the intellect, which generally command respect or excite the admiration of men, and which in a libeller serve only to throw a darker shade upon his moral disposition. A libeller has generally a ready wit, a sarcastic humour, but no admiration of noble qualities, no sympathy with suffering; he has a vindictive temper, a thorough knowledge of the baser parts of human nature, a complete

familiarity with everything that is low, homely, and trivial in language, not much conscience, not much consistency. Whatever be his end, personal abuse, vehement, unsparing invective, is his means. In all his performance there is nothing to raise or exalt our notions of human nature, but everything to desecrate and bring down. His main object is to vilify his antagonist, by no means to do honour to himself. If he is but enabled to make his victim writhe, he cares not what opinion people may form of its lampooner; provided he can make him sufficiently loathsome, he is reckless of being looked on with abhorrence, or that a good share of the filth which he throws on his victim should stick to his own fingers.

"The wicked that is persecuting an honest man," says *Bouddha*, "is like the fool, that lying on his back, spits against heaven, but his spitting, unable to pollute heaven, fell on his face. Or he resembles a person, that having a contrary wind throws dust at the people; but as the dust cannot reach them, it returns upon himself."

An understanding with but one window.—There had been and are even now nations having but one single book, a common but only source of their knowledge, as the Arabian *Koran* and the Indian *Vedas*. For many ages these books contained the whole stock of knowledge that was circulated in Arabia and India, as a kind of revealed encyclopædia: dogmatical theology, civil and ecclesiastical law, cosmogony, natural history, etc. The quiet minds of those nations, like stagnant pools or Dutch canals, standing stagnant and slow between its trim brinks, seemed for a long time quite satisfied with that one range of unchangeable notions, scorned to widen the contracted circle of their knowledge by

observations and experience of ages, and despised every new truth as a foreigner disturbing their apathy.

But there are also men of a single idea—a curious and interesting psychological phenomenon — who, having received no regular school training, were led by their particular cast of mind, as well by chance, to embrace one single branch of science, and who, by dint of native sagacity and perseverance, became very proficient in their limited sphere. Men endowed with *an understanding of but one window*, have neither talent nor inclination or curiosity for any other department of knowledge but what happened to attract their curiosity and exclusively engross their attention; expert in their craft, they can have no pretension to be numbered among enlightened men, nor may we enlist them among men of enlarged views. They are very indifferent to, if not disdaining and scorning every science not closely connected with their pursuits. Endowed with some ingenuity, but of a limited intellect, they do not even suspect the close connexion existing among different parts of human knowledge, and know nothing of their common source, which is lying too high for the reach of their capacity.

Their pursuits may sometimes turn out very useful to society; they may acquire some notoriety if not fame; but in conversation they make us startle by the bluntness of their comprehension, the dulness of their faculties, the dryness of their fancy, and the utter lack of wit and taste, which are the deficiencies of an understanding with but one window.

To the same category belongs *the one-eyed philanthropist*, who sees the woes of distant and unknown tribes of the interior of Africa, and is blind to the misery of his own countrymen and his close neighbours.

A shallow wit.—Men of a shallow wit, are like Indians who believe the world to rest upon an elephant, and the elephant upon a tortoise, and sit down satisfied; from two things following one another, they take the first for the cause, and the next to it for its effect, and display no inclination for enquiring farther into primitive causes. Shallow thinkers are visited with the incompleteness and feebleness of the logical faculty, and that easy resting in half understanding, with a complacent satisfaction in partial glimpse and with a knack of mixing up things totally distinct, which hinder them from arriving at the recognition of their own errors. They read aright only things lying within the reach of senses, but are unable of ascertaining their relations; they, however, never shrink from any assertion, taking the contracted bounds of their own wit, for the limits of the human understanding. It is as out of their power to plunge into the depths of thought, as for a fish to live out of water. They never probe to the quick, or penetrate beyond the surface. They cannot enlarge their view to those universal propositions which comprehend under them an infinite number of particulars, and include a whole science in a simple theorem; are incapable of drawing all necessary inferences from a given fact or a known truth. However, in every day's occurrences they have got, though not very deep, lucid notions; they know perfectly what they are about, bear often the appearance of men of plain common sense and determination. Their main deficiency is only visible when they try their powers in higher ranges of thought, but in the lower sphere they go straightforward, are not given to wavering, have rarely any misgivings, and are

often more successful in practice, than men of deep thought and higher parts: for they know but little of what is going on to the right, to the left, and behind them, which might distract their mind or disturb their security. A total want of perspicacity and forecast, is to them as serviceable as blinkers to mules, which, keeping them on the main road, are hiding from their eyes the gaping abyss on either side, and thus prevent them from tumbling into it.

They often display in their youth a quick comprehension, and learn everything with equal facility; they show as much talents and ability for mathematics as for poetry, but never rise above mediocrity. No science, no kind of literature, is found to take root in their barren minds, and never brings any fruit. They are to their dying day but an echo, that is repeating the sounds of others, but itself is dumb. Their talent can never mature itself into genius, and like the pale fruit that hangs in the shade, it ripens only to sourness.

There is a great difference between a shallow wit and a man of limited understanding; the former is capable of comprehending things, but is unable of piercing its surface or connecting his ideas; with the latter, many things are above his comprehension. Both are unfit for deep investigation, but the former is sliding glibly over the whole surface, whereas the latter but to certain limits. A man of limited powers of intellect will sometimes perceive and avow his deficiency, but a shallow wit is too presumptuous for such an act of sincerity; he is always ready to take it up with the more clever, and there is nothing so high to which he is not up. Nevertheless, he is never able of improving a propitious occasion, does not know how to

extricate himself out of difficulties, which he did not foresee, nor to profit by good advice. Never having opinions of his own, he is always changing like time-serving politicians, or like a weathercock, which is never shifting but when pushed by the wind; he is repeating by rote a given tune; you may persuade him into the greatest absurdity; he is able to repeat a high-flown sentence, which he has just learned from others, as if it was his own, and thus sometimes takes in the most cunning. Both have no idea of doubting, and are always very positive; and though such a habit of thought marks, in minds otherwise constituted, a very deep and firm conviction, shallow wits are changing their opinion as easily as their coats, stick to the new one as firmly as they did to the former, which they now explode. Their conviction is like a dry stick thrust in ground, which may be easily drawn out, for it is unable of striking roots. To perplex them, confute their arguments, and shake their convictions, any string of specious and high-sounding words, in the shape of arguments, is more than sufficient, though all this may have no relation to the matter at issue. The French philosopher *Condillac* is a marvellous sample of a shallow wit. It is next to impossible, even for a man of deep thought, to expose his ideas with such ease, off-hand carelessness, and clearness, without having first carefully examined, looked into his conscience, and observed the movements of his own mind. Had he not dared to grapple with psychology and political economy, we might be induced to set him down on the list of clear-headed men, or limpid wits.

People of shallow wit are inclined to condemn those of a solid and comprehensive understanding, and to

setting them down as metaphysicians, sophists, and refiners, and never will allow anything to be just, which is beyond their own limited conception.

A dim understanding.—He is living in a twilight of sense, and has but a glimmering of thought, which he can never shape either into reason or wit. His thoughts, as if half-veiled with a gauze sheet, are always dim, and, by a natural bent, take the shape of a riddle. They seem to have come forth too soon into the world to be swaddled with words, and to have brought along with them the chaos from which they had as yet no time to get disengaged. He is always stating the facts incorrectly, or is putting a false colouring to such of them as are true. He is applying to the explanation of facts some unsound principles, or applying good principles to facts which have no relation to them, or is deducing conclusions which do not follow from their facts or principles. These half-brought-out notions, half-formed ideas, are the offspring of some mysterious defect of intellect or mental abortion. Their unusual turn and shape, their unexpected apparition, rouses our curiosity, and by their fallacious appearance of depth, they set us a thinking, and sometimes make us confound confuseness with depth—*Tacitus* likes to concentrate in a small compass some very deep remarks which, if developed, might fill several pages; but an extraordinary shape of thought is no sure token of its profoundness, and it often happens that a truism or a very trite common-place idea, when set off by an imposing pomp of paradox, or dressed up in the tinsel garb of antithetical phrases, will rouse the wonder of inexperience.

A muddle-headed man.—Though not wholly defi-

cient in the capacity of comprehending distinctions, he always confounds things the most easily separable—the sound with the substance, the means with the end; is strangely deficient in the power of distinguishing analogies—which are arguments from analogies, which are mere illustrations: is unable to discriminate, in a somewhat complicated inquiry, the exact points on which the dispute turns, or if he happens to make it out, to keep it free from the intermixture with others allied, and not to confound it with a resembling question: is also deficient in the faculty of perceiving the relation and dependency of the different members of an argument, and in the art of stating them according to their natural order and connexion. Though seeming to know his way to a subject, he no sooner enters into it, that he stumbles and wanders about, and, if not wholly forgetful of his subject, is moving in parallels, till he comes to the outskirt of thick mazes, where he is lost without any hope of being righted. A peculiar sort of incoherency and unconnectedness characterizes his observations; his mind presents a sort of dislocation of thoughts, by which his premises are always slipping out of the joint that should unite them to his conclusions.

We have but one more stroke to give to this portrait: often while himself exhibiting the most helpless perplexity, or labouring under the most inextricable confusion, he yet proclaims with Narcissus-like self-complacency, and boasts of having afforded a complete solution of all the difficulties, and is seldom more thoroughly unintelligible, than when he feels satisfied of having placed a point beyond all farther possibility of doubt or dispute.

Three Mental Deficiencies of Literary Men.—Lite-

rary men soaring too high, totally engrossed with their thoughts, are labouring under three mental deficiencies, rendering them wholly unfit for practical life. They are subject to absence of mind, are deficient in ready wit, and too profound on subjects lying on the surface. Hence it comes that a second-rate capacity, an average wit, even a common-place man, though without any education, has enough practical sagacity for finding ways and means, in every emergency and under the greatest difficulties; whereas a literary man, after a prolonged cogitation, will only find out difficulties, without discovering means to meet them. A fatigued attention, a memory overloaded with a huge mass of knowledge, notions having no direct relation with the ordinary pursuits of life, and the habit of roving generated by indulgence, may in part account for this humiliating inferiority of persons in any other respect superior in parts and mental accomplishments.

A Person with a Marvellous Memory.—Men with wonderful memory, if not otherwise distinguished by their intellectual endowments, are showy, but empty; seldom make good the expectations and brilliant promises of their youth, and turn out to be common-place men, though their great memory often gives them the deluding appearance of great wits. They are, as *Howell* says, golden students, silver bachelors, and leaden masters.

A person of a marvellous memory is indebted to it for his jests, and to his imagination for his facts. He has the ingenuity of finding other men's wit, and whatsoever he lights upon, either in books or conversation, he makes bold with as his own. The rich booty made by his vast and retentive memory gives

him the semblance of a man of parts, enables him to dazzle with unexpected learning and acquirements, and to astound by expressions conveying deep thought; but all these blazing appearances will not stand the test of close examination. Besides, he is making too much fuss about it, and is putting the treasures of his retentive memory so untowardly together, that it is easily perceived that his wit has the rickets, by the swelling disproportion of the joints.

An Intellect deprived of Memory.—Memory is weak, either on account of the habit of listless inactivity of mind, or for being neglected and suffered to lie unemployed in early youth; or it has been impaired with bodily disease—chiefly from injuries of the head, affections of the brain, fever, and diseases of extreme debility; or from intemperance, and other habits of dissipation; or is decaying with the more advanced period of old age: but we often meet with persons born with such a deficiency, though otherwise endowed with sound and effective faculties of mind. The exertions of an intellect deprived of memory, are very like the occupation of the daughters of Danaus, who had to draw water with a sieve.

We have a very striking instance of such a phenomenon, in the person of a Genovese mathematician of the name of *Louis Lesage*. "I am born," says he, in his interesting pamphlet, *Clef de mon tour d'esprit*, "with four qualities of mind, that enabled me to make a great progress in sciences; and with two deficiencies in the intellectual faculties, which prevented me from being successful: viz., a great ardour in the research of truth, a very active intellect, a very acute understanding, and a great partiality for accurate and luminous idea. My two deficiencies were: a very weak

memory, and a very great inaptitude to prolonged attention." His father, a professor of mathematical and natural sciences in his native town, initiated him very early into the elements of those sciences; besides, he applied to the study of the classic literature. However, a memory singularly defective prevented him from deriving a profit commensurate to such an excellent method of education. Besides, there was a great discrepancy in the cast and inflection of their intellects: the father, though a man of extensive learning, was a matter-of-fact man, having in store a great number of facts, but isolated, hardly ever collected by a general idea, in which he had no particular delight; whereas the son exerted himself early in life to condense his acquired knowledge into some general principles, the remembrance of which is equivalent to the remembrance of the whole; and not contented with particular facts, inquired studiously into their relations; and in order that words, and their correspondent ideas, might not be obliterated in his memory, anxiously sought to substitute the logical train of thought to the fortuitous association of isolated facts or conceptions. To this he was led by the sentiment of his defective and leaky memory. Even in his later years, he anxiously avoided everything that might disturb the established order and arrangement of his thoughts. The biography of his intellect goes to elicit the relation between a weak memory and general ideas, and affords an argument to the opinion that general ideas may in some measure make up for the deficiency, or rather weakness, of the former; because the knowledge of isolated facts, reduced to general ideas, may be recollected with greater facility, and that, by their means, we get the mastery over the whims of our

memory. For if our memory would be able to encompass an infinite number of isolated facts, and display the whole of its treasure at every call, we might perhaps not stand so much in need of general ideas, and people might not like to take the pains of framing them; but the relative weakness of our memory makes it of absolute necessity: the number of general ideas in our possession makes up the difference between a man of a vast understanding and a man of common sense—between an enlightened man and a philosopher. *Lesage* was very early aware of the usefulness of general ideas, as apt to assist his weak memory, and showed a great ingenuity in devising means, helping out his memory, and facilitating to him the acquirement of knowledge. From his youth, he used to note every circumstance relating to his progress in learning. Sunday, as in England and Scotland, is at Geneva devoted to religious meditations, and every serious occupation or amusement is considered as a breach of its sanctity. *Lesage* was curious to ascertain whether God—as in the time of the creation, took a repose on the seventh day; for this purpose, he measured a plant every day, beginning with Monday, in order to ascertain whether it was growing upon Sunday. By this ingenuity, he convinced himself that "on the Sabbath the beneficent works of the Almighty Father are continued as on any other day."

Being unable to concentrate his attention upon one subject exclusively, or to divide it upon many—he made up the former deficiency by observing a great regularity and order in his investigations; the latter, by returning to it again and again by an unwearied perseverance. He used to turn to profit every accession of luminous ideas and every disposition to mental

exertion—comparing himself, on that account, to a painter that has to labour in darkness, and only by the transient gleamings of a sudden lightning. Sometimes he made very striking remarks; comparing the atoms with light, he says that, "if all things were translucent, and then reflected no light, we should be quite ignorant of the existence of that matter dispersed in space, and nobody would have even suspected that in order to see there is something more necessary than the eye and the object. There are, without doubt, many more things (especially in the moral and political world) of which we are wholly ignorant only because there is nothing to reflect them.

An absent man.—Absence of mind is not a weakness of character, but a deficiency of the faculty of attention, which is incapable of that degree of exertion which is necessary for memory, but always wandering, can never be brought to repose or stick to one object. A man who has his brains a wool-gathering is always in the clouds, always in a thoughtful mood, and meditative, has no fixed object of thought, gives his fancy a free range, and is not thinking, but only musing, moping, roving, dreaming, and dozing. He has rambling thoughts, and no power over his faculties. He may get many things by heart, but will never recollect when wanted. The least thing takes off his attention; his thoughts rise up in his mind in such rapid succession, are flowing as lightly as the summer clouds, are chasing each other like the flashes of a tropical night, and pass with the rapidity of a mountain torrent, never to return; hurrying along too rapidly for reflection, they had no time to get connected, formed into a chain of arguments, beget conviction, or be embodied in proper words. If he could think aloud, or if we could but

see the rapid stream of his thoughts shifting every moment, metamorphosed, and taking a thousand shapes, as the grains of a kaleidoscope, we might be led to suppose that he is a little touched, if not lost his wits. He is rarely, and only by starts, able to recollect himself, and recal his wandering thoughts. He never hears an answer to his own questions. When plunged into a fit of seemingly deep meditation, or pondering moodily, his eyes are fixed intently, all the features of his face are at a stand, in a repose not unlike that of the Egyptian Isis, he has the appearance of being deeply engaged in the solution of an abstruse and intricate question; but the vacant looks of his eyes show that with him the soul is absent from the sight, and that all his cogitating is but a train of waking dreams.

By want of a serious and constant application to anything requiring a continued effort of mind, his faculties had run to seed and got partly benumbed, —excepting the imaginative memory which brings up objects of dreamy fancy, pours forth from a perennial source all its stores unceasingly, permits that strange commingled web of reality and fiction to go down without leaving any trace of its passage.

An absent man roused from his dreams, seems to have lost all idea of personal identity, is quite incapacitated from attending to present objects, does not know his friends, hardly sees those present, is never able to tell the name of any person, often forgets his own, is never reading books, but turns them over, is never aware of his bungles, is in a constant shuffle of haste without speed, ever in a hurry, yet never punctual, he seems to have lost half-an-hour in the morning, which he is running after the rest of the day. His conversation is a strange mixture of rapidity and slow-

ness. He is turning on all sides, as if in suspicion of every object, speaks listlessly, always with quick and sudden motions; often starts, and then is staring or looking one way and roving another; returns people's civilities with a mutilated courtesy, is always tired to death, has never a moment of leisure, and complains of the time lying heavy on his hands.

A button-holder.—It was in that tedious month where there is no twilight, when you are not aware that the day is over and the night somewhat advanced, that I was sitting quite alone in my lodgings, Edinburgh, York-street, plunged in a fit of deep and gloomy meditations, when, glancing at my note-book, I wondered how it came to pass that for some time I had not the pleasure of setting down any new observation, concerning the oddities or bias of the human intellect. The reflection did not cheer up my spirits. Time lay heavy on my hands. I continued pondering moodily, when on a sudden I was startled by a tremendous rap at my door. Rather dissatisfied that somebody was intruding, just when I would have preferred being left to my own reflections, I had not, however, the courage to deny me, by the time the unwelcome visitor sent up his card, with a letter of introduction from a person that was a friend of my friend's acquaintance. However, as I heard him talking on the staircase, though little knowing who it was, I ordered to send him up; when there came in a little dumpy man, hair falling lank on his forehead, with ruddy cheeks, a thick clumsy head, a purple in-grain countenance, and very puncheon of a person; his dimpled face in good keeping with the general expression. His features would have been very coarse, were it not for the animated intelligence of his eye, by whose flash you

may read in his soul. After usual preliminaries, he took a seat, before I had time to offer one, folded his arms as if settling himself for a discourse of some length, stretched out his legs, and assumed the air of a person determined to be very particularly at his ease, which, betokening that he was a great talker, made me rather uneasy, especially as I was far from being in a mood to hear out patiently his commonplace conversation. A strong sensation of uneasiness might have broken forth in my countenance, for something he happened to remark in my face made him startle. However, he was not a man to be easily discouraged; so having seated himself comfortably, and folding his arms as men usually do when they are disposed to be long-winded and discursive, he began talking, but asked no questions, a bore which would have been past endurance. He went on, and took no notice of my distraction. At first I did not mind what he said, but, having caught some words which roused my curiosity, I began to listen more attentively; and how can I describe the joy, felt only by a *Columbus*, a *Newton*, or *Herschel*, when I discovered in my visitor a sample of intellect I never before met with, nor even suspected the existence of so decided, strongly set-off, queer and interesting cast of intellect. No sooner had this idea flashed through my head, than I instantly became as courteous and chatty as I was at the outset cross, cold and reserved. I encouraged as much as lay in me his talkative propensity, with a kindness of manner that was in very striking contrast with the style of my reception, as well as with the state of mind in which my visitor had found me, and I was soon furnished with a clue to the discovery of a new bias of human intellect; my harsh and discon-

tented features began to soften into a smile. The change must have been as quick as unexpected to the intruder, for he seemed to be astonished; but contentment was soon visible on his dimpled face, he went on talking with more alacrity. In the mean time, wishing to take nature in the fact, I noted carefully all peculiarities of this rare species of intellect, and give here my observations as they came fresh from my pencil, and a sketch of him as taken at the moment.

At his first starting I was already well aware that he was not a fool; he had read everything worth reading, had a very faithful and rich memory, and was endowed with a lively imagination; but he had no control over his associations, which flowed in unintermitted continuance, carrying all along with them, like a mountain stream; he seemed to find an unutterable pleasure, and to be compelled by an irresistible necessity of embodying in words each of his thoughts the moment it made its appearance. His perennial flow of thoughts had no beginning nor end; they were floating like a gossamer in a fine late summer-day, wafted by contrary winds, and unable to find something to take hold of. When I questioned him, which I did in order to keep him speaking, my nimble and digressive visitor was never ready for a direct answer, but, though it was a matter of no importance, he split my question into several tiny pieces, began with the creation of the world, with Adam, but soon abandoned the theme on a very slight occasion, assuring he will soon take it up again. Anxious of making himself understood, he begins with similes taken from common life, then turns to illustrating the true meaning of his comparison, and again refers to some pretended self-evident truth, though subjected to many doubts; then

he will move back to principles, and instantly return to inferences, confounding both, and entangling his argument in an inextricable knot. The more he gave proofs of his command of varied illustrations, the less I was able to comprehend; and though his arguments began with an intelligible breadth, they soon tapered and tapered away, finer by degrees and beatifully less as he proceeded, till they became impalpable to the sense. He was constantly moving round and hovering for a long time above the truth he was in search of, without ever happening to hit at it. All his opinions, all his feelings spin round and round like a weathercock in a whirlwind. There is no anchorage in his mind, no holding-ground for anything, all shifting as quicksand; he does not unite his ideas, but mixes them up at random; having shuffled all, entangled his thoughts in an intricate knot, displayed great riches of his memory, he is at a loss to know what to make of them. He almost puzzled me with analysis, confounded with discriminations and blinded with the electric light of his ratiocination. He goes disturbing, with wonderful industry, every root and dissecting every fibre, so that the plant ceases to be recognisable. He splits the bank-note, and divides infinitely the finest hair. Each of his arguments is like a circle in the water, which widens till it comes to nothing at all. His intellect is a dialectical mill, in which everything is ground to dust, which separates, and refines, and qualifies, till you are unable of making out what the thing is reduced to. He is away after every object that crosses his mind, which, like a ship on the ocean, having lost all her anchors, is exposed helpless to the fury of the storm, is thrown in contrary directions by

every shift of the wind. His intellect is teeming but bottomless, has no resting place, because he lacks a strong conviction, has no knowledge of primary principles to base his arguments upon or to begin with. His thoughts do not flow in one direction, but like gnats after sunset, are incessantly circulating, moving up and down, or making zigzags, disappearing but to return in a twinkling, in a new and yet more chaotic cluster, and never seeking a repose, as if the continual movement was their only mode of life. Thinking with him is not a laborious task, but a delightful amusement, something akin to the poetical pleasure derived by fools who are given to lying.

Every time he perceived the slightest indication that I wished to speak, he anxiously raised his voice, assured me that he was perfectly aware of my objections, but only taking another view of the question, and will instantly explain everything to my heart's content; beg only for a little bit of patience, seizes my both hands, takes hold of my buttons, and then, having such a pledge in his grasp, he began lengthening his long-winded harangue, never thought of sparing my patience, and was going on with such volubility, that it became all but impossible to check his inordinate love of hearing himself talk, or imposing a curb upon his fervid rhetorics. With the untoward dexterity peculiar to prosers, he contrived to dribble out his discourse to double its usual length, by the exercise of the privilege of unlimited digressions; having marched for several hours through the outskirts and outworks of his story, he came out with a "whereabouts was I?" which showed how much of his desultory tale was yet to be told. And thus he was talking and sputtering for the space of some

hours, till at last, for the tenth time, obliged to avow that he is at a loss to know what he was going to illustrate, examine, and prove, he became bewildered with his own ideas, was lost in the mazes of the labyrinth of his own making. Flushed by dint of incessant talking, he took out his pocket handkerchief to wipe his streaming face. I verily could not help pitying the man, though anxious observers happen to be cruel. In fact, I was greatly interested on seeing the display of his intellect, which proved to be like a windmill with golden wings, or a volcano that is working with enormous powers, but produces only cinders and evanescent gleams of light. It is one of the benevolent provisions of nature, that such a cast and bias of intellect is not contagious, one must be born to it.

A cross-grained wit, or ill contrived genius, presents a curious disease of mental vision. This cast of intellect is very like a concave mirror, which blends its own shape with that of the thing reflected, and turns it upside down. Though endowed with quick apprehension, lively imagination, and considerable acuteness in sifting out and laying down the tangible data of a proposition, he displays an unhappy obliquity of intelligence, is most decidedly addicted to opposition, and never fails of putting a wrong construction upon every uttered sentence. Though unwilling to utter untruth, he is perpetually making mis-statements, is always ready to take the converse of any proposition that is started, and has a remarkable bias for arriving at a wrong conclusion. He is constantly deluded by distorted views of his own making, which he is fostering and hoarding with fondness, as the result of his own profound and unprejudiced observation. He is

of an uncompromising temper, having taken up his opinions with little examination, upon slight, partial and inadequate grounds; he is unable, or will not admit the impression of facts or arguments which are calculated to rectify these unsound deductions. In the regulation of his conduct, he is grievously disposed to look upon the dark side of the things of this world, and is led away by hasty impressions, or feeble and inadequate motives, without giving any consideration to those which may have led him into a different course. He misconstrues every word that is told, understands everything preposterously, is peremptory in his opinions, and so fond of his blind infatuation, that it is next to impossible to make him give up any of his mistaken notions. You are never able to put him on the right way or convince him of his error. If he happens to yield for a moment to your reasons, it is only to return like a spring, that bent down, flies back with violence. Even the mistress of fools—Experience—sometimes a very severe one, is unable to undeceive him and rectify his preconceived notions, erroneous imaginings, and unaccountable prejudices, which with him become every day more callous, petrified, and impossible to extirpate. Civil words, a soft reproach, even a commendation, does not fail to get distorted in his mind to something offensive or be taken amiss. He misconceives every ironical expression, is constantly troubling his brain with chimeras of his own making, and when anything is uttered that is beyond his comprehension, he is always disposed to resent it, as a reflection upon his understanding. He is unconsciously creating round him a moral desert, where all kindness is misconstrued, all affections doubted, all sincerity suspected.

A strange genius.—The surest symptom of a distempered wit, or a whimsical cast of mind, may be traced to the capricious incongruity of his affections. An unaccountable, unexpected, and violent change of opinion, is the main characteristic of such a mind. What he was extolling with rapture to-day, he is peremptorily exploding the next morning. He feels highly offended at being reminded of his former sentiments, sticks to his new convictions with inaccessible pertinacity, as if he had never cherished any other from his birth-day, and seems totally proof against the force of facts or arguments that can be brought against him. Such unlooked-for shifting in opinions, notions, and wishes, such fickleness of temper, cannot be solely referred to some physical disease, and may be accounted for but by some deficiency of intellect.

He is like a bundle of thorns; you can never approach him without being pricked. You may never make out beforehand, how that "hair-brained Hotspur, guided by a spleen" will receive the intelligence of a thing accomplished; never guess beforehand what he may approve or condemn. His friendship, as well as hatred, taken upon the whim of the moment, is of doubtful duration. He has no lack of good sense and wit, so that his first blush, his crotchety notions, and sudden fluctuations, make us startle, and we cannot help wondering how it came to pass that the whole system of his apparently strong convictions may be without notice, broken up, and make room for a new one, getting a mastery over his mind, influencing his heart, and making him go over to quite opposite sentiments and passions so absolutely, as to change love into hatred, cravings and longings into indifference.

Men of such a frame of mind are sure that the times they live in are out of joint; are shocked and offended, without any reasonable motive; explode or are commanding, without any plausible reason; dislike the people, and cherish the dislike.

Young men of great parts, but straitened circumstances, when disappointed in their first hopes, begin their career as discontented and zealous reformers of society; are generally of a wayward humour, cherish their crotchety notions about the world, and scorn the inspirations of good sense and the better dictates of mind, till they have found a station congenial to their inclinations, or adequate to their wishes.

A slow wit.—Slow wits have the appearance of dolts, or persons of narrow and dull capacities; though going a slow pace of a tortoise, they are often found to have made a great progress in their peculiar department of science or erudition. Their gifts seem to lie too deep, their tongue does not readily interpret the dictates of mind. In their mental operations they display the sturdiness and heavy step of oxen in the plough; but they are endowed with great consistency, patience, constancy in labour, and perseverance in attention. Their motto is:—*Gutta cavat lapidem non vi sed sæpe cadendo*—a drop of water hollows out the hardest stone, not by its strength, but by dint of trickling down often. Slow wits are of heavy comprehension, but have clear ideas, and are less subjected to delusions and blundering. Bereaved of fancy and imagination, depicted in readiness of mind, they are, however, fit to achieve eminence in philology and antiquarian researches, possessing one of those strong industrious volitions, where perseverance amounts almost to genius, and nearly attains

its results. But poring over the most tedious books they are inclined to confound great things with little ones, appear to be quite unfit for practical life, being of that cast of intellect called by the French *l'esprit des escaliers*, which enables a man to know, when on the staircase, the answer he might have given when up in the saloon.

Apt to comprehend well the thoughts of others, to quote their sentences, to descant and expatiate upon details of no import, they have but few ideas of their own, no happy insight into the nature of things, no inspirations of genius.

Not discouraged nor deterred by any tediousness in their literary pursuits, they are seen picking bare unmeaning words the whole of their life, with unabated patience, and like to occupy their attention with matters that do not exert any of the higher faculties of the mind, and so get disused and quite unfit to reasoning and argumentation. Owing to such neglect, when debating and arguing, they have recourse to quotations, are alleging the opinion of others, only because they happened to write before their time, are taking shelter behind the authority of a thousand of books, without being able to come forth with a single argument of their own. Holland teemed in the seventeenth century with a host of those slow-witted erudites, whose unwieldy folios are encumbering our libraries. It is a great heap of literary rubbish, containing some pearls and precious stones that want polishing.

This mental deficiency is either native, when the memory is slow in recollection, or is generated by protracted exertion, and overworking of our mental powers, by constant and indiscriminate reading, or

want of habit in mental exertions, that may only be acquired in early life.

Men of fortune, crammed in their youth by concocted thoughts and ready-made opinions, who were taking their lessons closeted, annoyed, and reclining in drowsiness on a sofa, in their manhood are found to be slow wits. They dislike every mental exertion, especially general ideas which are not to be got without pains, have an abhorrence of their number and infinite variety of shades, would only submit to hear the result of long debates and acute investigations, cannot bear any system, preferring a historical view of things, though it may fall out to be superficial, and thus, notwithstanding their native talents, are seen to have contrived expediencies when it is too late to use them. From laziness of mind, they get the bad habit of procrastination, and always are waiting till the river has done flowing. Unfit for the cultivation of science, as well as for business and office, they cut a poor figure, exhibiting inaptitude, mediocrity, and afterwit, though nature has endowed them with every quality of faculties and capacities adequate to achieve success. They are not better for, in religious matters, having no reasonable conviction, but only faith founded on credulity. A man of parts generally takes the pains of studying the evidences of Christianity, and did not fail to examine all its irretrievable principles; a slow wit is only religious by a blind imitation, and thus stands the whole of his life on the brink of an abyss, ready to fall into scepticism, or to have atheistical misgivings.

A sly and crafty person.—We often meet with men that like better to impose upon or circumvent than convince. The most intricate mazes of intrigue, the

shrewdness in avoiding the main road, and finding out an intricate and wondering path—a remarkable propensity of the fox—low cunning in concealing their aim, acuteness in devising wiles and necessary means, tortuous and crooked course of policy, by which they have outwitted the most knowing, rapid capability of scheming, schemes skilfully conducted, plots artfully accomplished—afford them more pleasure and delight, than would all the advantages and material profits derived by righteous means. They are like a rower in a boat, who looks one way and proceeds the other. They are denying a thing that does exist, and display a great shrewdness in accounting for a thing that has no existence. Here, then, is a forcible illustration, a curious and very interesting fact—some hidden deficiency of intellect, some morbid propensity of the mind, misguiding the judgment, blunting the conscience, and stunning the moral feeling.

A crafty man finds always means of getting out of the greatest troubles; a sly man is capable of intricating and perplexing a most plain business, and likes to fish in muddy water. A cunning man proclaims a scheme to which he has bent his mind, as already accomplished.

A sly man is constantly attempting to weave a web of dark sophistry around the truth, always engaged in dirty plots and barren machinations; quite free of the bad habit of turning everything into discussion, he never contradicts openly, but rather shifts off an argument, never obtrudes openly his notions upon others, never asserts or argues; but is always insinuating, suggesting; he never would like to bare his mind to the world; is always using ambiguous, undefined,

double-meaning words, in order to prepare for himself a ready escape in need, and be able to come off artfully, when too closely pursued or meshed in a net of contradictions. His arguments have great subtlety, but no solidity. Employed in perverting the opinion and convictions of others, when at the same time carefully concealing his own, he searches more anxiously after what has but a mere appearance of truth, after plausibilities, than cares about inquiring or ascertaining it. However, with all his cunning ready wit, he has but a second-rate capacity, and just ability enough to deceive.

A sophister also argues for victory, not for truth; is never searching it earnestly, but assumes, as uncontrovertibly proved, what everybody is inclined to deny, and covers his theory with clouds of scholastic aphorisms. His sophistry nettles even among numbers, and often a gross fallacy cheats our senses by skulking under a formula. He is very ingenious in glossing over truths, making a garbled statement of the facts; he will pervert every fact he cannot help stating, and will suppress any which he can venture to conceal, and, with subtle manner and wily tongue, is apt to make wrong appear right. His oblique propositions discover his real opinions better than his more formal and direct assertions. He is very dexterous in perplexing his antagonist and embroiling him in difficulties and contradictions. He delights in generalities and knows perfectly the use of the ambiguity of terms in sophistical argument; his great secret consists in the employ of the same word in different meanings, or using the terms in a sense different from their commonly recognised acceptation, or in using them in one sense, in one part of the argument, and in another in

a different part of it. And then he is straining all his powers to elude inquiry by the rapidity of progression, hurrying the mind from one half-view of the subject to another, without giving time to reflect upon what has been presented to it. The Greek sophists, armed with an artful, but insidious logic, making use of captious and fallacious reasoning, exerted the most pernicious influence on the youth, particularly Athenian; arrogating the exclusive possession of wisdom, they pretended to have attained important secrets in political science, and boldly advertised, that they could infallibly impart to the young, for a certain sum of money, the arts of persuasion and statesmanship, the means in general of disputing successfully on any subject, making the worse appear a better reason. How great a mischief was perpetrated by the modern sophists, as *L. Blanc* and *Proudhon*, with their untoward social theories, their ridiculous, to say no more, "organization of labour,"—sophists that were capable of infatuating and deluding the plain common sense of the French workmen, and led them into the civil war, is too recent an event to be expatiated upon.

"Solemn the malediction set on him
Who doth 'pervert the judgment' of the poor,
Mislead the blind and ignorant, and dim
The meagre light which led them heretofore."
MRS. NORTON.

Mental bias of a lovesick person.—

"Love, various minds does variously inspire."
DRYDEN.

What the man may have been before that passion has engrossed his mind, it is certain that a love-sick

man, as long as that passion takes hold of him, is in an exceptionable state of mind, and exhibits some unusual inflections of intellect, which condescended to lay down its rights and yield the mastership to fancy. Well may *Miss Martineau* assure us, that their soul is then the very temple of adoration, of faith, of holy purity, of heroism, and of charity; it is, however, a fact, that love, overpowering and engrossing our mind, limits, as every pre-eminent passion, our understanding, and confounds our ideas. A man in love, and woman also, lives only in his heart, his best interpreter being a sigh; his understanding is suffered to lie unoccupied. Love stupifies the fool; of a man of parts it makes an unconscious poet, for love is poetry; restraining our attention to the present time, occupying it exclusively with the beloved object, it exercises an enervating influence upon our intellect. However, as long as there is any uncertainty left, the faculties of the lover are very busy and active; he makes use of sophistry, of the inductive method, and reasoning by analogy with a wonderful skill and ingenuity, though he may never have heard of those things; he is scrutinizing and scanning every hypothesis, trying every probability and combination, examining closely the most trifling circumstance, which will never escape his observation; weighing every evidence and emergency, in order to come to a conclusion congenial to the cravings of his heart, and arrive at the first sober certainty of requited love. But this is of no durance, as he soon finds out of having omitted one of those slight circumstances which betray another purpose, are reckoned by him as a faint foreshadowing of altered sentiments, and ruin the whole fabric of hope raised with so much pain of close reasoning, of moot-

ing, of anxious observation and active fancy. Now he is obliged to run over the trodden field of surmises, presentiments, and probabilities; but once satisfied and convinced that his affections are not unrequited, he begins his halcyon days. His imagination spins out a golden string, throws rosy hues over all, and gives bewitching attraction to every minute action —till jealousy rouses the reasoning faculties to new exertions. This green-eyed passion, like the uncertainty of unrequited love, examines anxiously all probabilities and appearances, ekes out unpleasant surmises, which instil the venom in a felicity which is woven of beautiful but evanescent fancies.

CHAPTER VI.

Mother-wit—Common Sense—A sensible Man—Difference between Common Sense and Reason—Common Sense cannot be improved, but is liable to be impaired—LACKINGTON, *the London Bookseller—The ingenuity of Common Sense*—FRANKLIN. *A rough or blunt Common Sense—A homely Wit—A Man of plain Reason—A prudent Man—A Person of Tact.*

NOTHING is less common than common sense: it is like genius, the gift of Heaven, and is more rarely to be met with than pearls and diamonds, so that even a sixpennyworth of it makes our life roll away glibly enough. Common sense is composed of two qualities of the intellect—sense and judgment: a man of great sense but weak judgment is not considered to have common sense, being only called *a sensible man*, who has the faculty of perceiving, is even able to discern, as if it were intuitively, that which a person of less sense will ponder over and study; but he lacks the faculty of judging rightly, arriving at just conclusions, and avoiding those errors in conduct which a person of weak judgment is always falling into.

Common sense does not reach as far as the understanding. A person of *common sense* may be endowed

with a sound judgment, which is but a portion of the reason, which selects or rejects, but is weak in argumentation. The understanding may be enlarged and improved by a proper training, but one must be born to common sense: it is a personal quality, a privilege of the mind, the rarest of human endowments, a mother's legacy, and for that reason is called a *mother's wit.* It is a lantern of translucent glass, that lights well, though not far; it is the surest guide in life, when not disturbed by passions.

A man of common sense is not inclined nor capable of plunging into the depths of thought, has no aptitude for nice investigation, is often at variance with philosophy, especially with the sceptical kind. Common sense is the understanding of second-rate capacities unimproved by learning; but a very efficient faculty in every day occurrences. A man of common sense, or a sensible man, is ready-witted, knows best how to split the nut, throw away the husk, and get at the kernel; he knows that the way the wind blows is best seen by throwing up straw; and that to carry about burning coals on the palm of the hand, one has only to cover it with ashes. In his contracted limits, he has no occasion for learning, for at the light of his clear lantern, he sees as well as the most learned, and finds means to meet any emergency, though in great difficulties he is more inclined to cutting the Gordian knot than able to dissolve it.

Common sense, called also sound judgment, sound mind, has something of health and strength in it, and has a close relation with corporeal health. It has been remarked that with the progress of culture, mother wit, along with native instinct, is blotted out and obliterated; hence we often see very learned men deficient

in common sense, or men that have sense in matters of theory and no judgment in matters of practice.

The mistakes or blunders of common sense are of a different dimension than those committed by persons of great parts and deep thought; a man of common sense is quite unable to commit them: for he never ventures so far in his judgments and arguments; he is sticking to the surface of things, and is only touching commonplaces. He is never absurd, fantastic, finical, affectedly noisy, or showy; takes advantage of no equivocations in argument, dealing always with particulars, he is safe from all great mistakes, "*serpit humi tutus*," reasons mostly in a series of small and minute propositions, in the handling of which dexterity is more requisite than genius, and practical good sense is of far more importance than profound and high-reaching judgment. This not very enviable circumstance leads him sometimes into delusive opinion of his superiority over his betters; besides, he is prone to thinking himself always right and infallible, is always positive and apt of making light of genius, learning, and superior wisdom, as liable to great delusions and mistakes. However, it is a fact that, if a man of higher parts is better enabled to make a choice of the aim, and to discover appropriate means, it is the man of common sense that is more handy in applying them to the purpose. In unexpected emergencies, men of common sense display more presence of mind and ready wit than men of genius and deep thought, for they are unable to foresee every possible hinderance or difficulty, look to a limited circle of probabilities, follow the first inspiration without wavering—inspiration that is the more distinct and set off, the less the man has been ruminating and weighing the chances. Men of genius,

foreseeing all consequences of a failure, all chances and difficulties, are naturally more at a loss to know on what to determine. Examining what may be the surest way of obtaining the end in view, they finish with doubting of success, are obliged to stick to probabilities, which are not easily ascertained; waver, hesitate, and at last miss the proper, perhaps the only, occasion. Hence it comes that people in general have more confidence in common sense than in great wit or enlarged understanding, and men having more extensive views on the matter; that even philosophers, as *Oswald*, *Reid*, *Priestley*, did not disdain to appeal from the understanding to the authority of common sense. The following illustration will, however, as we fondly hope, set off the wide difference between a common sense and the cultivated reason. Even a man of common sense *believes* that the sun will rise to-morrow, but an astronomer *knows* that the sun must rise to-morrow; are we then justified and authorized to give preference to common sense, and to appeal to that humble mental capacity in all obtuse questions which reason was found inadequate to solve, and to look up to it as the highest authority?

There is a great variety of shades in the common sense:—there is plain, sober, masculine, right, shrewd common sense; there is *sound common sense*, free from the delusions of sophistry and imagination, otherwise called "a good sense;" there is common sense free from the overflowings of sensibility, called "*a cool understanding;*" there is a talent in observing differences and of making right distinctions, which prevents us from confounding objects, a talent of determining the proportions and degrees of qualities in persons or things, called *discrimination;* there is

common sense displaying itself in the knowledge and right estimation of characters, which are not concealed by any particular disguise, or ascertaining the real qualities of either persons or things, called *discernment.* When common sense extends its views to the future, is directed to that which is to be done; when it is marking the relations and connexions of things, and is felicitous in foreseeing their consequences and effects; when it renders us prudent, guards us from mistakes, and prevents from involving ourselves in embarrassments, it is called *judgment.* The power of common sense does not extend beyond those limits.

Though *common sense* is a quality of mind that cannot be improved by training, it is, however, very easily misled and befogged. We have a very curious account of such an event by a certain *Lackington*, a bootmaker, and then a very rich London bookseller, in his "Memoir of the Forty-five Years of James Lackington," London, 1797,—where we may read a very interesting account of the adventures gone through by his common sense, as how his intellect was confounded and bedimmed, his judgment utterly lost and bewildered, and how at last his *common sense* contrived to burst through the thick veil that encompassed his mind, so as to enable him to enjoy the dawning light of truth; though he used to wink all his life, like a person newly come from a dark place. Clear-sighted as he was in the common run of life, he could, however, never attain the superior grasp and power of intellect, but lived on *common sense.*

Franklin, occupying a conspicuous place in the history of American independence, the inventor of conductors, the American Socrates, is a very remarkable psychological phenomenon, as displaying a single in-

stance we know of, of the most wonderful ingenuity of common sense: for he had received from Nature no great capacities, from society no education; he had nothing but the ingenuity of common sense to rise to celebrity, wealth, and influence: but he was endowed with matchless soundness of judgment, with a tame imagination, which, without colouring his thoughts with rich hues, rendered them pleasant and charming. Very clear-sighted in every day life, he displayed in his discoveries, and in devising the means for the improvement of his mind, a great ingenuity and discrimination. He boasted of a continued and unabated serenity of mind, through the whole course of his checkered life, and, what is more rare, he was not afraid of running it over again.

A rough or blunt common sense.—Men of such a cast of mind have got some clear ideas, and are able to put them together; but they are given to be positive and dogmatical: they decide at once, without much ado, explode and throw out, as useless husk and chaff, everything they are unable to understand, or that it is impossible to squeeze into their contracted apprehension, or might not dovetail with their countrified notions: they cannot differ from anybody without expressing, not merely dissent, but loathing and abhorrence. However, they are correct and right in their judgments whenever they do not go beyond their depth, and then a certain rugged and sterling worth pervades all they have got to say: they like to make you feel the full weight and superiority of common sense, and to impose their notions and opinions upon others: they have no taste, and display a remarkable unfitness for the acquirements of polished manners; even in their style, men not over-

fastidious are shocked with vulgar comparisons, taken from household occupations, similes very rude and loathsome, though sometimes very impressive: they exhibit a great firmness of purpose, but without any discrimination, and as pertinaciously when they are in the wrong as when they are in the right, which lends to their character an appearance of inflexible consistency.

A homely wit is born, bred, and grown up amidst agricultural occupations, in a farm-house. People remoter from towns retain longer the primeval simplicity of manners. Frugal by habit, they scarce know that temperance is a virtue. They work with cheerfulness on days of labour, but observe festivals as intervals of idleness and pleasure. "They keep up the Christmas carol," says *Oliver Goldsmith*, "send true love-knots on Valentine morning, eat pancakes on Shrovetide, once a year show their wit, the first of April, and religiously crack nuts on Michaelmas eve."

The daily occupations of an agriculturist do not require a quick or a vast understanding—common sense will do; hence it comes that men daily occupied with the handling of general principles, though obviously more enlightened and clever, are generally very bad farmers; their devisings, directions, and expectations make only smile a peasant of a plain household-understanding, who knows better and sooner what is to be done, and how to meet every emergency that may occur in his sphere of action. In the presence of a homely wit, a person of higher accomplishments looks doltish, if not quite stupid: it is but on the wider field of general principles of agriculture that he is enabled to recover the sense of his superiority. People of plain household-understanding,

footing on a sure though limited ground of experience, have no confidence in the judgment and opinions of a man of higher accomplishments: they know by instinct that he is capable of bringing along too abstract notions for practice out of those high ranges of thought, that he may value them too much to throw them off: they have a presentiment that he is given to be deluded, that his ideas and imaginings may throw a false light upon those homely matters, and thus make them deviate from the sure and main road of common sense. But they do not know, because that circumstance lies beyond their limits, that, though his general principles might be correct, the transition, however, from them to particular cases is one of the most difficult logical operations of the human understanding, and that it is not given to every man to draw just conclusions from right premises.

Plain reason is the source of uniformity in the judgments regarding conduct and manners: it maintains similar sentiments in all men, and is preventing those controversies to which the abstracted sciences are so much exposed. Men appeal to it, as to their highest authority, in all questions regarding the morals; at the light of that faculty they concur in applauding humanity, justice, and veracity, and are blaming the opposite vices merely on the plea of *plain reason.*

Prudence and forecast are two qualities of common sense, which bring it nearer to understanding. Prudent and perspicacious men stand in the middle, between common sense and great wit. It is not always that a clever man is prudent. The understanding is very much benefited by the support of these two qualities of common sense, as it is adorned

by wit or humour. Prudence is then somewhat higher in the scale of mental capacity than common sense. Prudent men know well—better than men of plain common sense—how to meet present emergency; but a perspicacious man is providing against futurity. Both are rather too indifferent about the past, have no idea of the great value of History, which is the ultimate resting-place of times past: but a perspicacious man is more anxious about futurity, has always an eye upon it, is on his guard against the information by the sense of hearing, watches patiently occasions, proper times, and knows how to improve them: he is not likely to let slip a fortunate occurrence, and knows why Fortune was presented by the ancients in the shape of a bald person, with but one lock of hair behind, slippery body and winged legs. Every moment of life shows the absolute necessity of prudence; however, too anxious prudence, too subtile and too restless, betokens some deficiency in the moral part of men's mind. Prudent men are very prone to upbraid others with the want of prudence: they seem to be ignorant of the circumstance, that it is not given to everybody to follow explicity the selfish whispers of prudence, because prudence is a quality of common sense, a faculty which is quite out of our control, and undergoing no influence of the will, which accordingly we cannot assume or bestow upon ourselves at pleasure.

A person of tact.—Tact, a kind of sixth sense, a delicate, subtle and intuitive qualification of the intellect, is the nice perception of things, of what should be, or ought not to be, done; it is the faculty of nice discernment, sure and sound judgment, great circumspection, with consequent nicety of skill, and, on

account of its uniformity, it bears a great resemblance to native instinct. A man of tact, without much pondering, reasoning about, and canvassing his actions in all their bearings, has a wonderful and almost instinctive skill in discerning the approach of a change of fortune, and of reading the signs of a coming reaction, signs which to others were invisible or unintelligible; such were *Theramenes* in ancient times, *Shaftesbury* in the seventeenth century, and *Talleyrand* in our own days, who, having a finer perception of all the peculiarities of character, and of all the indications of coming change, timed their desertion in such a manner, that fortune seemed to go to and fro with them from side to side. A person of tact is endowed with an intuitive knowledge of fitness, conveniency, and the best way of handling men and circumstances, and of profiting of any occasion offered, that is fit to bear on his projects and pursuits. Destitute of more showy talents, which would make him an object of admiration, envy or fear, a man of tact possesses a remarkable power of simplifying and dealing with the most complicated questions, and will easily find a clue to lead him out of any difficulty. He is never betrayed into argument, which always makes people more obstinate, even if they are confuted. Or, if constrained to reason, he is pitching the whole tone of his argument to the capacity, prejudices, and passions of those, whom he has to deal with; intent only to govern the action of men, by a sagacious calculation of their motives, he always prefers a feeble argument, but readily understood, to a stronger one, but apt to escape the appreciation of the common mind.

Men of tact are generally of contracted sympathies,

small mind, moderate intellectual faculties, not much above the range of common sense, of limited powers of thought and imagination, but they are never acting at hap-hazard and rovers, have an intuitive faculty for walking on the sunny side of the highways and byways of life, know by intuition with whom it is necessary to be reserved, and with whom they may safely venture to be communicative, and have a knack—and this is their uppermost ability—of reconciling conflicting interests, and of settling everything without discussion.

CHAPTER VII.

Understanding; differences and disparities of its reach, capacity, propensities, and biass—A man of a right understanding—A sober wit—A ready wit—An enlightened man—A systematical head—A great wit—A person of taste—The mathematician—The late-learned—The self-taught men—Dr. PRIESTLEY—LEIBNITZ—*A self-taught botanist discovered in the Pyrenees by* Mrs. ELLIS—THEMISTOCLES *delineated by* THUCYDIDES *as a self-taught man—Manchegan Prophetess of* Mr. BARROW—*A self-taught computer of Palermo—English inventors and engineers, as* WATT, ARKWRIGHT, SMEATON, RENNIE, TELFORD *and* BRINDLEY, *were self-taught men—The French poets* JASMIN, *a hair-dresser, and* REBOUL *the baker of Nismes—The Ayrshire ploughman,* ROBERT BURNS; JOHN CLARE; *The Ettrick Shepherd,* JAMES HOGG; BUNYAN *a travelling tinker; and* FERRACINO, *bred a sawyer, a self-taught mechanician.*

UNDERSTANDING, the mind's eye, the organ of causation, is distinguishing appearances from reality, perceives the lengthened shadow of coming events, judges of the aim, as well as the fitness of means, ascertains how far they may be commensurate and adequate to the aim, traces causes and effects to a great length and intricacy, in daily occurrences, as well as when framing a system of moral and natural philosophy, it

weighs the relative value of either reasons or facts; is the guide of our intellectual faculties, as well as of our mind and heart; detects the mistakes of conception, the slips of memory, the delusions of imagination, and rectifies them just as the tact corrects the blunders and delusions of vision; is—or should be—the indispensable director of that wonderful creature composed of body and soul, ycleped—the man. A native, instinctive, continuous, and unconscious propensity to inquiring and researching causes, and the capacity of foretelling even the remotest consequences, are the main qualities of the understanding. It is from the very feeble dawn of reason that this propensity begins to expand, is progressively increasing with its maturity, and may be developed by the early cultivation of sciences, or laws, or the classic literature. However, the understanding of every individual has certain limits set to it by nature, and remains different in intensity, compass, and elevation, which, by a proper training, may be only put forward, expanded, developed, brought to light, but can never be enlarged beyond its natural limits, as a shrub, notwithstanding the most careful culture, can never become a tree. But the slightest occasion is sufficient to rouse the sleeping energies of a youthful understanding: it is sometimes shooting forth with the vigour of a flowering aloe and the swiftness of lightning. Having found its proper orbit, it wings its course till it has displayed all the energies which it has received from Nature, to the very brink of its original limitation, and till it has run out; then it stops short—from that point no good-will, no encouragement, no ambition, is able to make it advance, restore its exhausted forces and fecundity, and make it overstep the charmed circle traced out for it by Providence.

The human understanding does not proceed from particulars to general ideas, from the idea of individuality to universality, else very few men, if any, would be capable of climbing such Alpine heights upon so short a ladder. Our understanding is fitted out with ideas of its own, which are like the fingers of the hand, ready to grasp everything brought within its reach by senses and apprehension. These fingers of the understanding are often very active, though there is little or nothing to be grasped at, as is the case in our youth, when we are very fond of universalities, and stand, in that respect, as high as any man of mature understanding ripened by experience. That is just what makes them self-conceited and presumptuous: for, seeing that they have got five fingers, just as many as any grown up man, they are sure of being able to play as *Lisht*, and to paint as *Tiziano;* the consciousness of having five fingers, in common with the most distinguished and highly gifted, makes the youth bold and headstrong. Hence it comes that they like better the history of mankind, which they are unable thoroughly to understand, than the annals of their native town; that they would rather reform society than their own bad habits, that they are manifesting the greatest enthusiasm for poetry and philosophy—that is, for what is the highest in the creations of the human mind; and that they have more leaning towards the intellectual world than to the physical half of it. It is scarcely in mature age that we take that middle station,—the most fit for us as it would seem,—which lies between the intellectual and physical world.

There is a great diversity in the reach, cast, and native qualities of the human understanding. There

are men capable of drawing all inferences, lying sometimes very deep and buried, from a given principle; of such a cast of mind was the sceptical *David Hume*. Others prefer turning back to the primitive sources, to primary principles, and are not satisfied till they have detected the fountain-head of the most high and abstruse truths; to those belonged *Kant* and *Hegel*, two of the most remarkable German metaphysicians. There are discursive, vast, but not deep understandings; such was the intellect of *Bacon:* there are very profound intellects, who like to plunge to the very bottom of thought, but are confined in one circle, and turn only in their peculiar orbit—this is a deep but a limited understanding; of that peculiar cast of intellect was the celebrated theoretical astronomer *La Place*, who, happening to overstep the circle traced out for him by Nature, proved to be of a startlingly limited capacity. The first consul *Bonaparte* appointed him a counsellor of State, but notwithstanding his partiality to mathematicians, was obliged to dismiss him the next day on account of his natural incapacity for business.

There is besides a great variety of some other propensities and leanings in men placed on that scale of mental capacity: as some, being greatly inclined to rash generalization, are capable of judging from few persons, from one village, of all mankind, of all ages, and all countries; they form their opinions and deductions hastily, from a limited number of facts, or a hasty and imperfect examination of their relations, are arguing with hasty strides, as in a hurry for coming to results. Others are rather over-cautious; proceeding step by step, constantly turning round and recurring to the past, because they are anxious not to

deviate from the main road. Some men are very slow, or unlucky in the anticipation of all consequences and effects; others are less acute in asserting the relative weight and value of things. Men of *penetrating understanding* are successful in the right appreciation of characters; persons of a *subtle understanding* are quick in seizing the delicate shades of thought, manifesting itself in correct language and well chosen expressions, with which they mark those fine and not indifferent distinctions. *Men of deep understanding* are capable of discovering the most distant truths; of *sprightly wit*, seize quickly the relations of things, are apt of drawing inferences from events as yet but dimly ascertained, and very entangled, and are capable of noticing the most distant similitude or analogy. *A penetrating understanding* is like a microscope, which sees, or rather makes us see, the slightest details and the most subtle structure; whereas a *deep understanding* is like a telescope, that makes us see things distant, and sometimes the mere shadow of coming events. A man of a *profound understanding*, patient in his researches, is proceeding slowly, but perceives the slightest shade of difference, has a great aptitude for abstruse sciences, will penetrate into the most subtle processes of thought, will learn and become master of all that does not outreach the mental capacities of man, will descend to the very bottom of science, pursue it to its utmost boundaries, and discover its first principles. But such a profound understanding is but rarely connected with wit; very few persons being equally expert and strong in argument and invective, which is a necessary gift for political orators, advocates, and polemical writers.

But the greatest differences in the qualities of the understanding originate in the quickness or slowness

in performing its functions; viz. perception, the evolution of complex ideas already existing, or the framing of new ones, generalisation, and argumentation. Supposing equal capacities and experience, the general gifted with ready wit will gain victories, whereas the slow-witted is only capable of giving a very learned and scientific description of it. *Napoleon*, who gained so many victories, was but a very indifferent historian. *Julius Cæsar* is the only man on record that has gained victories and has left a masterly description of his campaigns, which reminds us of the saying of *Plinius*: "*Beatos quibus contigit aut facere scribenda, aut scribere legenda, beatissimos vero quibus utrumque.*"

A man of right understanding has strong powers of perception and a faithful memory; his mind is receiving impressions with the facility of wax and is retaining them with the pertinacity of marmor: he is performing all logical operations with ease and rigorous accuracy, is endowed with a foresight and surefooted judgment, a sound and active organ of causality: he delights in tracing back causes, is able to make all inferences, and will not miss any link in argumentation; his logic is unfaltering: he is comparing facts and events, weighs their relations, bearings, and tendencies, and assigns to each circumstance its proper weight and influence in the conclusions which we are to deduce from them: in the investigation of historical transactions, he is careful in discriminating the cause from the pretext: he is able of arranging his thoughts with lucidity, and to connect distant truths; is very acute and expert in the formation of general ideas, and apt to disentangle knotted thoughts; is not easily led astray by any glaring sophistry, knows how to distinguish appear-

ances from reality, a shadow from its object; his own fancies, conceptions, and notions from their correspondent objects, and from words used to denote them. With him, the thought falls in promptly with a proper word. As to general ideas, which are the eyes of the understanding, he either has framed them himself, or has repeated the mental operations which gave birth to those that are current: he knows perfectly and is not apt to forget their genealogy. Words have in his memory a very close connexion with their correspondent ideas, to whose indication they are used—the sign and the thing signified having become so inseparably blended in his mind, that the one is never suggested without the other; hence it comes, that he is always speaking correctly, and keeps up a lucid order among his thoughts; he is but rarely using unwonted expressions, nor is he giving a new turn to the language which he cannot wield and mould at his whim, or bring forth its hidden qualities and excellencies: he anatomizes things, follows out their differences, arranges them in their proper places, and then speculates on their mutual bearings: he cultivates that patient humility, which builds general inferences only upon the repetition of individual facts, and only seeks the truth by listening to the accents of Nature's teaching: endowed with a clear mental eye, he does not divine, like genius, but he sees: he is linking his acquired knowledge into an interrupted chain of effects and causes, and going up to principles and the fountain-head of every of his notions, he is retracing his steps: he is able of recollecting what he had learned in former days, by going from one link to the next one, and not by following the flow of poetical associations, which being whimsical in

their movements and not under the control of logical rules, bring forth reminiscences that were not needed, and which are only disturbing our mind.

Sober wit.—A man whose heart and passions are under the sway of reason, who is capable of foreseeing all the consequences of his purposes and actions, who in everyday life never neglects to turn his thoughts to times that are to come, is called and acknowledged to be a reasonable man, or a *sober wit:* he has never wondered or marvelled at any thing, rarely changes his notions and opinions, and is always consistent; the whole of his life, all his actions and pursuits, were never at variance with his settled principles: his mental faculties, as well as passions, are never put out of their accustomed equilibrium, and are always subservient to reason: he never was led astray, never wandering, never soaring on the wings of imagination, which last faculty only supplies him colours to deepen or set off his thoughts and heighten their effect; but generally his imagination is toned down, passive, and is coming forth but rarely and only in the shape of a flow of association; its analogies and similitudes are limpid, easily understood, but clothed in plain words, having more logical accuracy than vivacity of fancy. A *sober wit* has no wings long enough to soar in company with genius: his imagination may only give assistance to reason and cover with flowers of fancy its logical dryness. The current of his thoughts is not hiding itself under ground, then bursting forth from a den, rushing down a cascade, boiling and frothing with a furious speed, undermining its borders, but flows with unruffled uniformity as a stream upon a flat level whose bed is not obstructed by impediments. A man of sober wit is like

a torrent becalmed in a deep pool, reflecting the external world like a mirror, but mingling not its hue with the images lying on its surface.

Men of cool mind and of a strictly logical reason labour under some peculiarly obnoxious mental propensities, especially before experience and knowledge of the world and its ways has taught them to show more indulgence for the foibles and frailties of mankind. Generally they are too apt of being highly offended and revolted with absurd conclusions, with every mistaken notion, every unguarded word, every prejudiced statement, and particularly by sophistry, or arguments brought in by head and shoulders. Wrong conclusions, distorted views, are always capable of ruffling their mind and putting them out of temper: they look upon things as they are stripped bare to the sad reality; are alive only to the absurd, the useless, and the incongruous, and have an eye only to the grotesque and to the deformed. Being incapable even of conceiving and imagining a deficiency of sense, an imbecility of mind, or a want of perception, they set every mistake, every blunder, on account of wickedness and perversity; this leads them to hard judgments, and uncharitable treating of besotted, but, maybe, kind-hearted people. They are looking for system, cause, aim, consistency, purpose, even in the actions and proceedings of fickle or headstrong characters. Besides, they have got a strongly-rooted opinion, that every truth may be brought to light and deduced by reason and arguments; that we are capable of *knowing* every thing; that therein no other modification of our knowledge which deserves our confidence; that there is no escaping errors, delusions, fanaticism, the moment we cease to search the source of some of

our opinions and knowledge elsewhere than in our reasoning power, which, in their opinion, is the only fountain of conviction and the only criterion of truth: they hold in no estimation the opinion of others, or the consequences of their own, but are tasking their reason to the utmost to account for every thing, and they discard every notion as mystery and error, which they are unable of explaining by an effort of mere intelligence; measuring men, Providence, and Nature by the limits of their understanding: they never glow with enthusiasm, and only arrive at virtue through the expediency, and finish with worldliness. *Dr. Johnson* is a fine specimen of a person of a strong and massive understanding, but without those higher imaginative powers which constitute a genius; hence it comes that he admired no poetry which did not contain some weighty moral truth: we see him stalking in a rough way over the favourite haunts of poetry, and trampling down its flowers with a provoking indifference.

A ready wit.—Without being endowed with a deep and continued river of wit, he is very happy in lucky repartees and concise sayings, which, however, cannot be brought to a strict examination, without losing all their flavour, froth, and charms, and without baring their emptiness and shallowness. A ready wit is eminently fit for practical life, being endowed with certain extemporary acuteness of perception, and of quick delivery of his thoughts: he reads aright and apace the characters of men, sees the drift of every discourse, knows his goal and aim as well as the road which is leading to it; but his intellect is incapable of struggling with the difficulties of apodictical knowledge, and the deduction of truth from a long series of

reason. Men of ready wit, impatient of deliberation and second thoughts, are fitter for society than for counsel; are more apt to tickle the ears, rouse the imagination for a moment, excite pleasure and admiration, than to leave a lasting impression, or to contribute to the improvement of their fellow-men or to the progress of science; they are like the lightning, capable only to glitter but not to enlighten.

An enlightened man.—Having learned the first elements of sciences by a dogmatical method, he soon found out that it was difficult, not to say impossible, for him to make a farther progress with such passively received knowledge to help him out, till by mere chance he discovered that the history of every science is its best commentary and illustration. The Roman law, commented upon from the discovery of its codex, at *Amalfi*, during many centuries by men remarkable by their acuteness, was never satisfactorily illustrated and understood, till the jurisconsults—treading the path opened by *Savigny*—took to historical method. Following their example, the enlightened man, learned diplomacy and politics not so much from the books of *Grotius*, *Puffendorf*, *Vattel*, or *Machiavel*, as in the history of different nations. Even as regards sciences, he found that the study of the history of their dim and weak beginnings, the account of their aberrations, the pointing out of their great landmarks in their progress, the disclosure of their revolutions, is the best method serving to make the greatest progress in the shortest time. Such works as *Bailly's* "History of Astronomy," *Montucla's* "History of Mathematics," *Whewell's* "History of the Inductive Sciences," opened to him the gates of different sciences, and facilitated to him the comprehending of the first

elements of astronomy, physics, natural history, chemistry, botany, mineralogy, and geology, which concentrated and reflected in *Humboldt's* "Cosmos" present a gigantic monument of the first half of our eventful century. He was astonished to see, that with a scanty knowledge of the elements of those sciences, passively received, he was by the aid of their history, enabled to make such progress, as to take a delight in *Humboldt's* "Cosmos," and even to understand that stupendous book. He was then, by his personal experience, fully convinced that the historical method never leaves us adrift or in darkness, but is constantly accompanying you amidst flowery meadows, along the winding stream, into a sunny nook, or down the dale with many a shadowy lane opening upon you; following the guidance of history, you are sometimes agreeably startled by the view of a little mountain-lake, with a water-lily floating on the wave, or where the willow dips its pale leaves in the swollen stream; then you come unawares near a cascade displaying all the beauties of a rainbow, or leaning on the brink of a precipice you are allowed to look on its appalling darkness, vying in horror and gloom with *Val de bue*, hollowed in the flank of Etna, till you get on the top of a mountain, from where you may be able to survey with a refreshed mind the whole panorama of sciences, the mountains, the sea and the islands illuminated by the last beam of day, and to account for everything which displayed itself in bird's eye view before you. And thus you reach the goal almost with regret; but now a theoretical exposition of any of those sciences, which at the outset appeared and was dry and tedious, is only rousing very pleasing reminiscences of our historical travels, and may be

studied not only without disgust, but with redoubled interest and curiosity.*

The earnestness of the intellect of an enlightened man is as remarkable as the constant repose of his mien and manner and a certain philosophical serenity of mind. Its constitution is sound and healthy; no particular faculty is preeminently developed, but manly health and vigour is diffused through all. His intellect is essentially direct and strong; he is enjoying that clear mental vision which attends on moral purity; the rectitude of judgment which rewards the subjection of the will to the reason, and the earnest stability of purpose inesparable from the predominance of social above the selfish affections: he prefers those studies which directly contribute to human happiness, and is using for the investigation of practical truth, not general principles and broad conclusions, on which he might fairly take his stand, but rather some palpable and homely facts, such as are not beyond

* The efficiency of the historical method even when brought to bear upon uncultivated and strongly-prejudiced minds is thus evinced and supported by the evidence of two French missionaries in Thibet :—"Nous avons adopté un mode d'enseignement tout-à-fait historique, ayant soin d'en bannir tout ce qui pouvait ressentir la dispute et l'esprit de contestation; nous leur donnions (aux lamas de H'lassa) un exposé simple et concis de la religion, leur laissant ensuite de tirer eux-mêmes des conclusions contre le bouddhisme. Des noms propres et des dates bien précises leur faisaient beaucoup plus d'impression que les raisonnements les plus logiques; quand ils savaient bien les noms de Jésus, de Jérusalem, de Ponce-Pilate, la date de quatre mille ans après la création du monde, et les noms des douze apôtres; ils ne doutaient plus du mystère de la rédemption et de la prédication de l'Evangile. L'enchaînement qu'ils remarquaient dans l'histoire de l'ancien et du nouveau Testament était pour eux une démonstration."—Huc. *Voyage dans le Thibet.*

denial, or within the reach of simple and accessible test. There is nothing affected, ambiguous, vapoury, or mystical about him: he is dividing knowledge according to its sources, into matter of fact and matter of inference, which last vary from perfect certainty to the slightest suspicion: he is never confounding innovation with improvement, and is forming his opinions only after a full and candid examination, and with the clear perception of the grounds on which they are founded. Both in the formation of his opinions, and the regulation of his conduct, he is giving the due weight to all considerations, to all motives, to all circumstances and facts which ought to influence his decision, and is always open to the true and full impression of any new fact or argument apt to bear upon his opinion or capable of modifying it. He does not think himself authorized to reject scornfully the evidence of phenomena, only because they are not supported by analogical facts. His excellent reasoning faculties were developed by the early acquisition of varied knowledge: he is well read upon every subject; has limpid motions, more enlarged views, and is endowed with a sure judgment: he is like a traveller with *Murray's* "Guide" and a good map; he not only knows where to go, but how. Following the track of a truth, he knows beforehand the distance where it is likely to be found, all delusions that are lying in wait for him on the road, the logical rules he must observe, and the time when he may hope to arrive at the term of his journey: he knows well the genealogy and biography of all his opinions; is ready to repeat on his fingers all the operations which led him to those complex and general ideas of which he is in possession; he is capable of tracing them back

to their source at every call. Though not polemically disposed, he will easily account for all mistakes and blunders made by others, but has a great forbearance for the foibles and failings in action as well as reasonings of his fellow-creatures, as he knows by experience that a question has for a long series of years formed the great rallying point of discussion and controversy, may have easily assumed false and exaggerated proportions, through the mist which that controversy has raised: he then spares the feelings of the good, and avoids direct hostility with obstinate and formidable prejudice; his forbearance goes even so far as to submit to be told the things he knows well, by people who know nothing about it. Philosophy only taught him not how much he knew, but how little; not merely is he well aware of what he has attained, but of how much he is ignorant. His perception of the ridiculous is exquisitely fine, and he seems to have the rare art of preserving the reputation of good-nature and good-breeding, while sometimes indulging his strong propensity to mockery; however, his raillery flows on in a stream undiscoloured by any shade of malevolence, and unruffled by any expression of coarseness and bitterness: he has the disposition to distrust and reject whatever is obscure or cannot clearly be expressed; whatever is fantastical or hypothetical in speculation, though he fears the face of no speculative difficulty: he knows how to reduce verbal disputes to their proper value; is always ready to abandon a problem which seems to admit no solution; however, he willingly hears what is to be said on both sides, is open to argument, and resolved for the unprejudiced admission of any conclusion which shall appear to be supported by observation and argu-

ment, even if it should prove adverse to notions he may have previously formed or taken upon the credit of others. However, he is not easily imposed upon by false reasoning, or by a specious jargon passed off for philosophy, nor shaken in his confidence by trivial statements or frivolous objections. He is not one of those that would "steer too near the shore to show their wit," any more than, "like a daring pilot in extremity would he search the deep, playing with the danger when the waves run high."

A systematical head.—A great love of stiff symmetry, a particular pleasure of the systematical arrangement of his thoughts according to their seniority, executed with great perseverance, is the main feature in the character of such an intellect. A man with a systematical head is generally of a slow comprehension and a sluggish imagination. His memory does not bring forth its recollections in groups or crowds flowing in long associations, but return to mind in the same logical order in which they were primitively arranged and connected: that is, in an uninterrupted chain of causes and effects, never on account of the sameness of place or time, or other more poetical motives of association. A systematical intellect is wholly engrossed with the architecture of its thoughts; such a man never thinks of the roof before he has done with the foundation; he builds up from the ground, is always formal, methodical, and didactic. Generally bereaved of imagination and of humour, nor warmed by the feelings of the heart, he is stiff, insipid, and dry; his arguments are not faulty, but heavy, dragging along the straight and main road, and accessible only to similarly framed minds: he observes the rules of logic very anxiously and strictly, is adopting the only

method which philosophical precision demands, assigns each argument its place, not according to its relative weight, but in a manner suitable to his own notion of its abstract conclusiveness: he does not touch the heart, does not rouse our sympathies, does not stir up the imagination; and his tedious and monotonous argumentation occupying only the reasoning faculty becomes loathsome, and finishes by fatiguing, if not disgusting.

Nothwithstanding this regularity in the combination of his thoughts, this painfully raised pile will crumble and fall to pieces if you take a single stone out of it. The creations of a systematic reason display the regularity of Grecian temples, but are destitute of life and colouring, and are generally as tedious as the Dutch gardens. A systematical intellect is unable to soar, but it stalks with the gravity of a stork, never making one larger step than the former and the next; it is inclined to set a greater value on school-logic than on the poetry of a *Byron*, or a *Milton*, or the orations of a *Demosthenes*, and are apt of preferring the trim gardens of *Le Notre* to English parks.

A great wit.—A right understanding endowed with *wit*, is what we call *a great wit.* To all the qualities of a right understanding, it joins the sprightly quality of wit, which enables it to make surmises, to grasp at the slightest hint or suggestion, to enliven its thoughts, render them more fluent, and give them a more taking and a more pleasant appearance.

A person of taste.—To judge of the cause and its effect, to distinguish appearances from reality, truth from falsehood, is the department of our understanding. Our conscience gives us an unasked-for warning

concerning what is good or bad in our wishes, longings, leanings, and actions. The faculty or mental power, the joint result of natural sensibility, good judgment and early familiarity with the best productions of art, by which the beauty or ugliness, the sublime and the beautiful, are perceived and enjoyed, is called *taste*. This is one of the higher faculties of the human mind, which though it wants regular training and practice—

> "Nor gems, nor stores of gold,
> Nor purple state, nor culture can bestow
> But God alone."
>
> AKENSIDE.

A poetical sensibility in the progress of the mind becomes as distinct a power as a musical ear or a picturesque eye. A man of high and refined taste is only pleased with Nature drawn with all her graces and ornaments, is very sensible both to beauty and deformity of every kind. Reading a poem, or looking upon a picture, he is enjoying the masterly strokes with exquisite relish and satisfaction, but is fatigued and disgusted with insipid conceits, as well as with incongruous parts of a composition, or a work overstocked with the constant endeavour to shine and surprise. Every absurdity or negligence rouses in his soul uneasiness, and is grating on his high ideal. Delicate taste makes him sensible to pains as well as pleasures which escape the rest of mankind: he is happy by what pleases his taste in a poem, in a picture, or in a piece of music, is very nice in distinguishing characters, and marking insensible differences and graduations of preference.

But there is a great variety of leanings among men of taste, one is more pleased with the sublime,

another with the tender, a third with the ludicrous; one having a strong sensibility to blemishes is over fastidious; another has a more lively feeling of beauties; one is extremely studious of correctness, another is apt of overlooking defects, and pardoning even absurdities, for the sake of one pathetic stroke; one has a sense entirely turned to correctness and energy, others are only delighted with copious, rich, and harmonious expression.

The full development and refinement of taste has a visible influence upon our mind. We meet in history with nations remarkable for their fine taste in painting, music, and architecture, but wanting manly courage to fight out their liberty. A man of refined taste is sometimes weak-minded, effeminated, too soft-hearted, fastidious and unable of bearing adversity with manly fortitude: a strong-minded man among persons of refined taste is rather an exception.

We have but one more stroke to give to finish the character of a man of taste. Sometimes he proves to possess a more sensitive ear than conscience, is apt of confounding good breeding, smoothy manners, and courteousness with virtue; taking everything gilt over for gold, he is but rarely capable of correctly appreciating the real and sterling value of men; he is constantly praising, inclined to lavish his encomiums upon everybody and everything indiscriminately, and taking a rose-coloured view of things. Hearing him talk rapturously of pictures, statues, music, and poetry, one would think mankind has got nothing to do but paint, rhyme, sing, and be happy. But on the other hand, there is no denying that the contemplation of the ideal beauty, its study in the

fine arts, in poetry, or oratory, never fails to bestow on us a certain elegance of sentiment, excites in our mind soft emotions, cherishes reflection, exercises the judgment, and tones down the fierceness of some passions, as for instance, ambition. We know from history, that ambitious men, after a long course of troubles and anxieties, accompanying their slippery career, took to pursuits gratifying their taste, as the last resort of their wearied mind.

The mathematician.—Having devoted all the time and talent of his youthful days exclusively to the study of mathematical sciences, considered at his school as a principal discipline of the mind, and as a means of forming logical habits, he was not educated to the full development of the reasoning faculty. Long confined to the routine of demonstration, the easiest exercise of reason, where much less of the vigour than the attention of mind is required to excel, having only to deal with form and quantity—having never employed his faculty in search of causes, he was not inured to the other modes of ratiocination, especially to that more general and useful mode of reasoning by induction. He got the spring of imagination dried up in his mind, without acquiring any pre-eminent accuracy of thought, being in general none of the most clear-sighted in matters beyond his province, mathematics having left his intellect as they found it. Long accustomed to lay together and compare ideas, he has reaped demonstration, the richest fruit of the speculative truth, for his labour, but regards with contempt all the lower degrees of evidence. Prevented from going far astray by absurdities to which error leads in mathematical science, he acquired too great a confidence in

his powers of reasoning and judgment, and is easily inflamed against all opinions in contradiction with his own. Believing himself in possession of demonstrative certainty in regard to the object of his science, he is sure of possessing as apodictical a knowledge of many things beyond its sphere; hence his overweening presumption and incurable arrogance. Conversant about the relations of ideal objects, and exclusively accustomed to the passive recognition of absolute certainty, he has almost lost the capacity of real observation, knows nothing of experiment, nothing of induction, nothing of reasoning from analogy, nothing of collecting and balancing of probabilities, and never dreamed of exceptions. Having no experience, or hardly any notion of the coacervation of proofs from many probable grounds, of arguments from the certainty and adaptation of thought, of the collision of proofs, of useful probabilities, through their almost infinite degrees, from simple ignorance to absolute certainty; having no idea of exceptions from ordinary truths in extraordinary cases, having no sagacity in detecting and avoiding the fallacies which originate in the thought itself of the reasoner; he is disqualified and incapacitated for reasoning at large, and can never form a right judgment on subjects whose truth or falsehood is to be rated by the probabilities of moral evidence. Accustomed to the higher degree of evidence, he became insensible to any other; his mind has got hardened by the habit of rigid demonstration, so destructive of the finer feelings of moral evidence, which must, however, determine the actions of our lives as well as our opinions; hence it comes that he is panting for and expecting a greater certitude in the management of business,

than the business of this world is capable of. Alienated by the special character of mathematical sciences, from those habits of caution and confidence, of skill and sagacity, which the pursuit of knowledge in the universe of probability requires and induces, he is obliged—when venturing upon speculations beyond his calculations and diagrams—to accept the facts either on authority or on imagination, or to repudiate as unreal, what he is himself incapable of verifying. Untrained to that acute scent, to that delicate, almost instinctive tact, which, in the twilight of probability, the search and the discrimination of its finer facts demand; exclusively engrossed with the deduction of inevitable conclusions from data passively received; accustomed to the consideration of necessary connexion alone, to the exclusion of liberty or free agents; he was, in fact, never actively occupied in quest and scrutiny. Such partial exercise of the reasoning faculty has clouded his vision, indurated his touch to all but the blazing light, the iron chain of demonstration, and left him to a passive credulity in any premises, or an absolute incredulity in all: he has but a choice of two opposite extremes before him—credulity or scepticism—a mind open to every prejudice and error, and a great leaning to atheism. We know that astrology was the least visionary of *Kepler's* belief, that *Newton* and *Napier* sought and found their fancies in the Apocalypse; and *Lalande* was a confirmed atheist.

The late-learned (ὀψιμαθεις, *sero sapiens*).—With a strong feeling of their superiority, having spent the best part of their life in contest with a bad or no education, the late-learned are mortified to discover themselves only on a level with their contemporaries.

Winkelman was one of those late-taught: he complains that he appeared too late in the world, and in Italy. *Bridaeus* declared that he was both late-taught and self-taught.

A self-taught Man, or native genius (*αὐτοδίδακτος*).—Every man, says *Gibbon*, who rises above the common level, receives two educations: the first from his instructors, the second—the most personal and important—from himself. The intellect of self-taught men, unschooled and uninstructed, is of a larger capacity of a man of plain common sense; self-taught men without proper training, and no access to books, may acquire knowledge, but are unapt to embody it in proper and adequate terms, or to give it expression; for they were not accustomed to reflect upon their thought, and then are unable to analyze, distinguish and arrange them. Fit for putting in practice his conception, a self-taught man is but rarely apt of directing others. He may comprehend arguments when not too long or intricate, but is unable of drawing from them further inferences: he follows faithfully the inspiration of Nature, but is rarely found to be able of availing himself of the discoveries, improvements, and suggestions of others. Restless from nature, with fresh faculties not stunned by unskilful schooling, or violently constrained to flow in a channel contrary to the turn of his genius, he is continually weaving from his own mind like a spider. His ideas are connected in a peculiar mood, his conceptions, as well as blunders, have their proper features and peculiarities: in poetry they are marked by originality; in mechanics, by some new, unlooked-for, and ingenious inventions. It must, however, be added, that though they disdain the trodden paths and rut, sometimes more by ignorance

than purposely, they are not to be rated geniuses; because the conceptions of a genius are not only new, but vast and sublime. The want of knowledge, of what has been accomplished by others, may lead to originality; genius is a rare gift of Heaven.

However, a self-taught man bears great appearances and semblance of genius, and has some inflections and propensities in common; both think for themselves, and have no particular liking for the conceptions of others; a genius, because he has got plenty of his own; a self-taught man, because he was not schooled, and accustomed to adopt the ideas of others; in general, he likes to have his own way, but hardly ever knows where he is going. He is a traveller without *Murray's* "Guide." Such unschooled genius is striving for himself to cut a new road through scientifical prairies; when engaged in any particular science, displays a great activity and boldness, will perform quite novel experiments, and thus further greatly the progress of sciences, but is almost always found to be deficient in his capacity as inductive philosopher. The want of proper school-training has a great influence, and affects our understanding in a quite unexpected manner. It often happens that the want of a thorough education in classical literature, mathematics, and natural philosophy, a confined knowledge and the want of a systematical study of the particular science in which a man of an inquiring cast of mind is engaged, contributes to the activity and boldness with which they perform at random quite novel experiments, while the same defects impair their capacity as inductive philosophers.

"The merit of *Dr. Priestley*," says *Lord Brougham*, ("Lives of Men of Letters and Science") "as a cultiva-

tor of science was activity, with which he made experiments, the watchful attention with which he observed every phenomenon, following the minutest circumstances of each progress, the versatility with which he prosecuted every new idea that arose from his trials, his diligence in recording all the particulars, as if well aware how much depends, in every branch of inductive philosophy, upon allowing no fact to escape when we are confessedly in search of light, and can never tell how any given fact may bear on the unknown conclusion to which our analytical process is leading us. As a reasoner, his powers were far less considerable. He possessed not the sound judgment, the large circumspection, which enable men to weigh the relative value of either reasons or facts: he was cautious enough, and drew little from his imagination in feigning hypotheses, if it be not the reason which he invented from time to time for the purpose of sustaining the desperate fortunes of the phlogistic theory, and making the facts bend to it, as they successively rose with a force capable of shivering it to pieces. But he was also deficient in the happy sagacity which pierces through apparent dissimilarity, and ranges things apparently unlike under the same class. He had not the chastened imagination which can see beyond the facts present to the senses; in a word, he was much greater as a collector of new facts than a reasoner upon them, and his inductive capacity was inferior to his power of experimenting and of contriving the means of observation."

Leibnitz has thus described his own case, bearing on the subject under discussion:—" As I grew in years and strength I was wonderfully delighted with the reading of history, and having obtained some books of that kind in German, I did not lay them down till I

had read them all through. Latin I studied at school; and no doubt should have proceeded at the usual slow rate had not accident opened to me a method peculiar to myself. In the house where I lodged, I chanced to stumble on two books which a student had left in pledge. One, I remember, was *Livy;* the other, the chronological *Thesaurus of Calvisius.* Having obtained these, I immediately devoured them. *Calvisius*, indeed, I understood easily, because I had in German a book of universal history, which often told me the same things; but in *Livy* I stuck longer; for as I was ignorant of ancient history, and the diction in such works is more elevated than common, I scarcely in truth understood a single line. But as the edition was an old one, embellished with woodcuts, these I pored over diligently, and read the words immediately beneath them, never stopping at the obscure places, and skipping over what I imperfectly understood. When I had repeated the operation several times, and read the book over and over, attacking it each time after a little interval—I understood a good deal more; with all which, wonderfully delighted, I proceeded without any dictionary till almost the whole was quite plain. My master, dissembling the matter, repairs to those who had the care of my education and admonishes them that they should take care lest I should interrupt my studies by a premature and preposterous kind of reading; that *Livy* was just as fit for me as a 'buskin for a pigmy,' that books proper for another age should be kept out of the hands of a boy, and that I must be sent back to *Comenius* or the lesser catechism. And without doubt he had succeeded, if there had not been present at the interview a certain erudite and well-travelled knight, a friend of the master of the house.

He, disliking the envy or stupidity of the master, who, he saw, wished to measure every stature by his own, began to show on the contrary, that it was unjust and intolerable that a budding genius should be repressed by harshness and ignorance; rather, that a boy who gave no vulgar promise was to be encouraged and furnished with every kind of help. He then desired me to come to him, and when he saw that I gave no contemptible answers to the questions he put, he did not rest till he had extorted from my relatives permission to enter my father's library. At this I triumphed, as if I had found a treasure. I longed to see the ancients, most of whom were only known to me by name—*Cicero*, *Quintilian*, and *Seneca*, *Pliny*, *Herodotus*, *Xenophon*, *Plato*, and many a Latin and Greek father. These I revelled in as the fit took me, and was delighted with a wonderful variety of matter before me; so that before I was twelve years old, I understood the Latin writers tolerably well, began to lisp Greek, and wrote verses with singular success. Indeed, in polite letters and in poetry, I made such a progress that my friends feared, lest beguiled by the sweetness of the flattering muses, I should acquire disgust for studies more serious and rugged. But the event soon relieved them from this anxiety; for no sooner was I summoned to the study of logic than I betook myself with delight to the thorny intricacies, which others abhorred. And not only did I apply easily the rules to the examples, which, to the admiration of my preceptors, I alone did, but expressed my doubts on certain points, and already meditated some novel views, which, lest they should escape me, I committed to paper. Long after, I read some

things which I had written at the age of fourteen, and was wonderfully delighted with them.

"Those who had the care of my education, to whom my greatest obligation is, that they interfered as little as possible with my studies, and as they had before feared lest I should become a poet, so they now dreaded lest I should stick fast in scholastic subtilties; but they did not know how little my mind could be filled with one class of subjects; for no sooner did I understand that I was destined for the study of the law, than, dismissing everything else, I applied myself to that. And in this way I reached my seventeenth year, happy in nothing more than this, that my studies were not directed according to the judgments of others, but by my own humour, for which reason it was, that I was always esteemed chief among those of my age in all college exercises, not by the testimony of tutors only, but by that of my fellow-disciples."

Mrs. Ellis has discovered, in the Pyrenees, a self-taught Botanist. "*Pierrine Gaston*, a native of a little village of Beost in Ossau, a man of respectable but humble parentage, was brought up to the life of a shepherd. He obtained while at school, as most of the peasant men of this neighbourhood do, a sufficient knowledge of the French language for the common purposes of life. In familiar conversation, he and his family still speak the patois of the country. While following the occupation of tending his sheep amongst the mountains, he amused himself with the collection and examination of plants, and first became distinguished by his knowledge of their medicinal properties. Not satisfied with this, he obtained an old copy of *Linnæus*, and in order to understand it, purchased a

Latin Dictionary, which he found on a book-stall at Pau, for the price of nine sous. With this scanty means, he commenced his botanical career. He was then thirty years of age, he is now (1841) thirty-nine, and has in his possession a valuable collection of plants, amounting to three thousand specimens, accurately designated according to their class and order. All who seek his acquaintance from a real interest in this science, find him an intelligent and agreeable companion, combining all the delightful simplicity of his unsophisticated life, with the dignity of native genius, and the politeness of the true gentleman.

"Nor are his talents confined to this branch of study alone. He is a very skilful musician, and when our friends visited him, which they did at his paternal home, where his venerable parents are still living, they saw a kind of harp, and a violin, with other musical instruments of his own making. His residence is a large farm-house, such as is usually occupied by cultivators of the soil whose circumstances are easy, and comparatively affluent. . . . In returning this visit, *Pierre Gaston* drank tea with our friend at Eaux-Bonnes, when he remarked, with great simplicity, that he had never tasted tea but once before, on which occasion he had eaten it dry. We had afterwards the pleasure of meeting him at their house, and a great treat it was, for his appearance in every respect equals the idea one would form of such a character.

"His figure is above six feet in height, thin, agile, and admirably formed. His jet black hair, which hangs in loose curls upon his shoulder, is cut close in front, and this he told us was the custom of the country, because of the habit the peasants have, of carrying

immense bundles of hay and straw upon their heads, and the necessity there is for them to see straight before them. He wore that day a short blue jacket, with a handsome sash of crimson silk tied round his body. But his majestic brown cap, which he kept on even in the house, from a habit he acquired in consequence of the keenness of the mountain air, was the most striking part of his costume, and harmonized with his appearance better than any other could have done, by casting a deep shadow over a thoughtful expression of his interesting face. His countenance was entirely one of the valley d'Ossau: his nose slightly aquiline, his eyes quick and intelligent, his eyebrows clearly pencilled and a good deal arched, and his regular white teeth the most beautiful I ever saw. His movements, which were as rapid as expressive, were at once dignified and graceful; but the most extraordinary feature in his behaviour was, that seeing the floor half covered with a carpet, he would on no account be induced to tread upon that part until he had taken off his shoes, which he placed under a chair, and resumed when he went away. On this occasion also, he appeared to be very much in the dark with regard to our manner of taking tea, for when the lady of the house asked him in the morning if he would come and drink tea with them in the evening, he thanked her and refused, saying, he had already taken some that day. When the cup was placed before him in the evening, he plunged into it a large piece of bread, and soon as it was emptied at once returned it to the tray, and rose up to go away."

Mr. George Borrow ("The Bible in Spain,") mentions very singular abilities of a poor girl at Manzanares, the capital of La Mancha. "I was standing in the mar-

ket-place conversing with a curate, when a frightfully ragged object presented itself; it was a girl about nineteen, perfectly blind, a white film being spread over her huge staring eyes. Her countenance was as yellow as that of a mulatto. I thought at first that she was a gipsy, and, addressing myself to her, inquired, in Gitàno, if she were of that race; she understood me, but shaking her head, replied that she was something better than a Gitàna, and could speak something better than that jargon of witches; whereupon she commenced asking me several questions in exceedingly good Latin. I was of course very much surprised, but summoning all my Latinity, I called her Manchegan Prophetess, and, expressing my admiration for her learning, begged to be informed by what means she became possessed of it. I must here observe, that a crowd instantly gathered around us, who, though they understood not one word of our discourse, at every sentence of the girl, shouted applause, proud in the possession of a prophetess who could answer the Englishman. She informed me that she was born blind, and that a Jesuit priest had taken compassion on her when she was a child, and had taught her the holy language, in order that the attention and hearts of Christians might be more easily turned towards her. I soon discovered that he had taught her something more than Latin, for, upon telling her that I was an Englishman, she said that she had always loved Britain, which was once the nursery of sages and saints, for example, *Bede* and *Alcuin*, *Columbus*, and *Thomas of Canterbury;* but, she added, those times had gone by, since the reappearance of *Semiramis* (Elizabeth). Her Latin was truly excellent, and when, like a genuine Goth,

she spoke of Anglia and Terra Vandalica (Andalusia) she corrected me by saying, that in her language those places were called Britannia and Terra Betica. When we had finished our discourse, a gathering was made for the prophetess, the very poorest contributing something."

A friend of mine, a Spanish gentleman, native of the same town, Manzanares, who knew that girl from her infancy, corroborating every thing as above related by *Mr. Borrow* about her abilities, added, that she is improvisating on every theme, and on the name and condition of every traveller whose attention she was able to arrest.

Thucydides gives the following graphic description of the abilities and ready wit of *Themistocles*, who was a self-taught man: — "*Themistocles* displayed the whole power of his genius with which Nature has endowed him, and, as a person made pre-eminent by Nature, deserves commendation. He had but a natural, his own understanding; for he never has cultivated it or enlarged with learning. Without the deliberation he gave a sound judgment on unforeseen events; very often would make just inferences concerning what was to come, and foretold all their consequences. He knew both how to illustrate and how to carry out every business. In case of any deficiency of his experience he made it up by his high understanding. In doubtful cases, he was capable of foreseeing what may happen of the worst and of the most prosperous. With his powerful genius, acute understanding, he perceived at a glance what to others only a long meditation would disclose."

It is a common saying that poets are born, and orators made; but to the former we may add me-

chanics and mathematicians. Some twenty years since there was a boy of the name of *Giuseppe Puglisi*, from Palermo, son of a glover, who, when but six years old, evinced an extraordinary capacity for computation. A merchant, having bought from his father a large stock of gloves, told him to bring pen and ink to calculate the sum total which he is to pay; but the boy said, it is of no use, because he had already made it out, and that it amounted to such a sum. Asked who had taught him to compute, he answered, nobody. From that time, he was put to resolving more and more difficult problems, which he did with a progressive facility. The report of his wonderful abilities in computation was soon spread in the country. The calculating boy was presented to the *Intendente* of Catanea, and shortly went over to Naples, where the young *Puglisi* acquired money and fame at a period of boyhood, when nobody even dreams of such things. When at Naples, he resolved with equal promptitude the easiest, as well as the most difficult arithmetical problems. He had a distinct consciousness of his powers, comprehended with clearness any given problem, and proclaimed the result of his calculations in a strange manner. He was capable of giving an accurate account of his proceeding and arithmetical operations; in resolving a very complicated problem, would point out where the difficulty was lying, though he received no sort of education, for, numbers excepting, he does not know neither to write nor to read. In giving him a problem to solve, it was necessary to explain the nature of a square number; he immediately knew how to calculate the roots of any given square number. Mathematics appear to lie quite ready in his mind, as

Minerva in the head of Jupiter. When the following problem was given him, — There is in the Tiber so much water, what time was requisite to pour it out? —he answered in a twinkling. When asked how much did they drive out every day or every hour; he was not long proclaiming the solution, expressed in millions. At last appearing to have enough of it, he cheerfully exclaimed, in his Sicilian dialect—*Lo saccio benfare, ma essi non sanno domandare!*—which made the whole company laugh with delight. He has nothing striking in his countenance: pale visage, light hair, blue, dim, and languid eyes, small stature, weak constitution,—a very quiet looking stripling. Some sagacity is, however, visible in his countenance. But when the given problem rouses him from his childish train of thought, you see the workings of his intellect; his countenance grows serious and mighty; transported with joy, he jumps up, his eyes are glaring, which adds new charms to his graceful looks, he is announcing the solution of the problem with a strong and charming voice, which excited general enthusiasm, and drew forth peals of applause.

It is a remarkable fact, that the English inventors, as *Watt*, *Arkwright*, *Smeaton*, *Brindley*, *Rennie*, and *Telford* (who had a singular distaste of mathematical studies), were neither mathematicians nor natural philosophers, but individuals of humble station, endowed with that specific bent of mind, and that peculiar faculty of combining the data of traditionary and acquired knowledge, which in them supplied the place of direct instruction in the principles of mathematics, mechanics, and general physics, and who, by powers of discrimination almost intuitive, by innate habit of observation, by practical knowledge gathered in the

workshop, gradually rose to professional celebrity, illustrated the scientific eminence of England, and enlarged its commercial power. One of the above-named, all but entirely ignorant of reading and writing (the last art hardly extended farther than the accomplishment of signing his name) has, however, contrived to finish a great many canals, that go in all directions, and spread like a net over England. *James Brindley*, unwilling to disturb the level of water, conducted his canals across the navigable rivers, or under ground, or across the rocky and often sandy mountains. Vanquishing skilfully stupendous difficulties, he put in wonder the most sagacious of his contemporary civil engineers. His inventive talent prompted him to make discoveries for himself, and to devise means for vanquishing particular and unlooked for difficulties, or inventing the most beautiful and economical simplifications. It never struck his mind that he might as well take the advice of others: he never thought of looking into a book for information; but then he was not able to give an account of his proceedings: he would rather take to bed for one, two, or even three days together, and there reflect till he had found means that would answer. These were compelled inspirations, which usually come by themselves. Ignorant of even the elements of mathematics, without plans traced or models formed, he constructed very complicated machines that answered perfectly: he performed his calculations by approximation, counting two or three times over, and thus coming every time nearer to truth. His conclusions were generally correct. In his enthusiasm, he gave, before the Committee of the House of Commons, the remarkable answer, that "*Rivers have been created*

only to feed canals." Through continual exertions, and overstraining his mental powers, he got a slow fever, which, lasting some years and undermining his constitution, brought him to an untimely death.

Ferracino, bred a sawyer, the constructor of the great clock of the place of St. Marc at Venice, was a self-taught mechanician of great genius. As almost all self-taught men, he was unable of profiting by the study of his science, and quite ignorant of books. Advised to apply himself to the regular study of the principle of mechanical science, he used to reply, that Nature had been a very good teacher to him, and that he had all the books he wanted in his head.

France has to boast of *Jasmin*, hairdresser of Agen, an untaught genius, whose amatory verses and *soubenis* will live as long as a taste for elegancy and truth of diction is appreciated by lovers of poetry. *Reboul*, the baker of Nismes, indited also most delightful poems.

The British literature has to boast of *Robert Burns*, an Ayrshire ploughman, whose songs live and breathe in the peasant-life of Scotland, and shall never be forgotten, till among the people have decayed the virtues by which they were inspired, and which they celebrate. We might add to the number of this untutored cluster of genius, but we prefer mentioning two more: *John Clare*, whose haunt of inspiration was a low fall of swampy ground, used as a pasture, bounded by a dull rushy brook, overhung with willows. *James Hogg*, the Ettrick Shepherd, who passed all his days in the green pastoral hills and dales, is the author of very beautiful ballads and melancholy or merry lays. We may find a whole race of self-taught men among the unknown writers of the old romances

and the ancient ballads of European nations, where sleep many a *Homer* and *Virgil*.

Bunyan, a travelling tinker, the author of "Pilgrim's Progress," an allegorical representation of the Calvinistic Theology, rivalling *Defoe's* "Robinson Crusoe" in popularity, was also a self-taught man, who not only worked his way out of extreme ignorance, but passed the stage of burning enthusiasm and reveries that racked his peace for three years, before his genius was enabled to subdue the opposite prejudices of *Johnson* and *Franklin*, and placed his name on a level with *Dante* and *Spencer*.

CHAPTER VIII.

Wit and humour; its nature: It cannot be acquired or enlarged: Its relation to higher faculties—What is it that makes us laugh?—Different kinds of wit.—SOCRATES' *wit*—CERVANTES—SWIFT—*Irish bulls.*

A MOUNTEBANK, in Leicester-fields, had drawn a huge assembly about him. Among the rest a fat unwieldy fellow, half stifled in the press, would be every fit crying out:—"Lord! what a filthy crowd is here! Pray, good people, give way a little. Bless me! What the devil has raked this rabble together? Zounds! What squeezing is this! Honest friend, remove your elbow." At last a weaver, that stood next him, could hold no longer. "A plague confound you," said he, "for an overgrown sloven; and who, in the devil's name, I wonder, helps to make up the crowd half so much as yourself? Don't you consider, with a pox, that you take up more room with that carcass than any five here? Is not the place as free for us as for you? Bring your own guts to a reasonable compass, and be d—d, and then I'll engage we shall have room enough for us all."

If our reader upon perusing the above story, as was in time faithfully related by *Swift*, could not help laughing, he knows perfectly what *wit* is, without any definition of ours. But sober-minded men

are generally inclined to undervalue that brilliant and quicksilver faculty of our mind; they might have met persons, who, unable to restrain the vivacious restlessness of their wit, thought nothing of disparaging merit, laughed virtue to scorn, and sometimes tainted men with erroneous principles; they may know by instinct or experience, that playful wit and a fine sense of the ludicrous are often connected with unfitness to any protracted exertion of the mind, and are generally to be found in company with a cold and callous heart, a frivolous disposition, and flightiness of character. A man of wit is sure to please, amuse, and intoxicate; but the startling discovery of the vacuity of his mind, which is easily brought out, and never fails of displaying itself on close examination, makes us shudder and recoil. Men of wit are often very like pomegranates of the Dead Sea, which when opened moulder off into dust. *Voltaire*, a first-rate wit, whose very lip denoted the love of jibing ridicule within him,—notwithstanding his deep-rooted habit of judging every proposition by its own merits, notwithstanding his contempt of received opinions,—was not ashamed of flattering those in power, and paying their doubtful sympathy with the most abject and loathful adulation. We are delighted with *Swift's* compositions; though not everything in them may chime in with our feelings and principles, but the frozen mind of the Dean of St. Patrick's, more than indifferent to the most heartfelt and cherished feelings, a kind of uncompromising antipathy and callousness to everything connected with tender feelings, which sticks out from every one of his sparkling words, makes that, though delighted with his works, we cannot be prevailed upon to

cherish their author. Hence it comes that professed wits, though courted for the amusement they afford, are seldom respected for the qualities they possess.

There is, however, no quality of intellect so sure to please, and which dazzles more by its brilliancy, than a fine, ready, and sparkling wit. Even men of gravity, of vast genius and fame, men conspicuous in history by their glorious achievements, showed an unrestrained delight in the displays of wit. *Thomas More*, according to *Erasmus*, himself a most exhilarating companion, had something ludicrous in his aspect tending to a smile, was more inclined to pleasantry and jesting than to the gravity of the Chancellor, and he died, as he had lived, with a jest on his lips. *Democritus*, the philosopher; the Macedonian *Alexander; Demetrius Poliorcetes; Sylla* the blood-tinted; the prince of Roman orators, *Cicero*, delighted in the society of men of wit. *Cervantes*, *Molière*, *Voltaire*, *Aristophanes*, *Swift*, have embodied their brilliant wit in works which are an inexhaustible fountain of pleasure, even to men of an average cultivated mind, and lead to laughter so irresistible and genuine, that the reasoning faculties are put to the rout, and have no power to sit in judgment. *Sterne* having met by chance with the works of *Rabelais*, took to reading them with so much assiduity and eagerness, that he forgot the long wished-for canonship, and disappeared from society. *Plato* and *John Chrysostomos* gave the greatest encomiums to Aristophanes' comedies; the former used to say, that the Graces, looking about for a shrine, had chosen his heart for their constant abode. We know but of one instance of a man highly gifted, and himself the wittiest man of quality of his time, passing condemn-

ation upon the laugh. "Laughter is easily restrained by reflection," says *Lord Chesterfield,* "but as it is generally connected with the idea of gaiety, people do not attend to its absurdity. I am neither of a melancholy, nor of a cynical disposition; and am as willing and as apt to be pleased as anybody; but I am sure that since I have the full use of my reason, nobody has ever heard me laugh."

Wit is a sort of inexplicable visitation; it comes and goes with the rapidity of lightning, and is quite as unattainable as beauty. It may be developed, cultivated, and polished as a diamond to cut and shine, but the most careful training is incapable of endowing with it a person that was not born to it, or metamorphose dull people into wits. One may own common sense, judgment, or a deep understanding, without wit; but it is quite out of power for the most skilful education to sharpen those valuable mental qualities into wit, if not bestowed upon us by Nature. It is quite a spontaneous faculty; any attempt at wit, if denied by Nature, is sure to finish with a complete and humiliating failure. We have no control whatever over this quality of mind, which does not consist in the habit, but in the native leaning, and in a natural gift of attending to the lighter relations of ideas. The best thing is to leave it to its natural bent, to let it grow and expand without any restraint; then it will keep its freshness and genuine hue, like a periwinkle sheltered in a hedge.

There is not a person of so an unhappy frame of mind as to think himself inferior in judgment and reasoning faculty to any of his most gifted neighbours; the only superiority of intellect capable of exciting the envy of men, is wit; because of its being more showy

and dazzling, as men prefer gold on account of its brightness to iron, notwithstanding its more extensive utility. However, wit is seldom a lonely quality of the mind; few men have ever possessed it in an extraordinary measure, without being capable of achieving something higher than its own triumphs. It is commonly accompanied by many other talents, and ought to be considered as a strong evidence of a fertile and superior understanding. Brightness is not the only quality of wit; it is a useful backing to judgment, a set-off to reason, a peculiar ornament to genius, and an almost inseparable concomitant of its most splendid forms, as genius is not inconsistent with the sagacious perception of the ludicrous and the most vivid sense of humour.

Men of wit are shaping their thoughts, and connecting their ideas, in that mysterious manner which is capable of rousing a laugh; whereas men of deep understanding link their ideas in a way best calculated to disclose the mysteries of Nature. The former endeavour to exhibit the ludicrous side of the foibles and failings of mankind, and let loose their spirit in search of the ridiculous; the latter are anxious to trace out the sources of it, and to explain the eternal laws of the moral world. We show our wit in inventing, our judgment in distinguishing, our reason in explaining, and our genius in the structure of the whole system. Men of understanding discover the relations of things, judicious men perceive the differences; whereas men of wit find out analogies, similitudes and sameness in things and circumstances, where judicious men, or men of understanding, perceive but discrepancies and differences. A man of wit may not be as en-

lightened as a man of understanding, may have less discrimination than a judicious man, may not be up to a man of genius, but it very often happens, that he has guessed at a bound what, to a reasonable man, remained a riddle, what has for a long time, but to no purpose, engrossed the thoughts of a judicious man, and what has never struck the mind of a man of genius. A man of wit will seize with an eagle eye that which escapes the notice of the deep thinker, will sooner hit the nail on the head than a man of good sense, whereas the latter will sooner find it out by a laborious train of reasoning than hit upon. Men of wit get always the start of persons lacking that quality of mind, will sooner find out means for encountering some minor difficulties in life, have got a quick perception of the slightest deviation from the rules of fitness and expediency, have a quick apprehension, great readiness, a good memory, but no deep reflecting mind; they have skill required to invent those slight, fresh, and natural topics which are the fittest objects of successful conversation; but they are gliding over the surface of things, or hovering over them like butterflies running only after sweets, and indulging in the pleasures of fickleness. However, though not deep in thought, they have often unexpected conceptions and are eminently skilled in the narrative art; they know well how to raise expectation, engross and rivet the attention of their hearers, are capable of alluring them to a premature solution of their entangled plot; know how to baffle expectation, to embroil, confuse, and confound all; to let follow a singular ever by something more wonderful and strange; to rouse fear and sympathy, to grieve to the

very heart, and on a sudden to turn all into a light jest, satisfy the mind, and leave to fancy matter enough to spin out, and give to reason a fresh incitement to some new reflections; and as any tale, even the shortest, is pleasantly occupying our fancy and is listened to with interest, it is no wonder we like better a man of wit, though we respect more deep learning and a higher range of thought.

Men whose wit serves as an ornament to deeply reflecting mind, who are given to a keen observation of every ridicule, who are endowed with falcon's piercing eye, to detect vice under every veil, or folly in every shape, generally excel in comedies, satires, mock-epopea and novels, portraying the weaknesses, foibles, and failings, foppery, impertinence of men, and strew with flowers the road leading to some high truths, strong convictions, and are exhibiting truth in its nakedness. The comedies of *Molière*, as "Tartufe," "L'Ecole des Femmes," have more contributed to the improvement of morals in France, than all most serious tracts and dissertations on morality. *Cervantes* made Spaniards loathe the poring in the novels of Chivalry, which prevented them from reading more useful books. Flashes of wit, and compositions enlivened with sallies and frolic, cheer up the mind, and dispel the sadness of the heart, overwhelmed with despondency. *Esculapius*, the father of medicine, used to compose merry songs, in order to rouse the benumbed spirits in a diseased person, and to keep his lungs in movement. *Erasmus Rotterodamus*, who, lay ill with a dangerous botch, was healed by a burst of laughter, when reading in the letters of *Obscurorum virorum* the words "*diabolice me inutilem faciam.*" The physician *Rabelais*, dedicating the fourth book of his Gar-

gantua to *Cardinal Chatillon*, says that he only wanted to exhilarate his patients according to the prescription of *Hippocrates*, who enjoins to cheer up the mind of the sick by a playful wit.

To discover the ridiculous side of a thing, and arrange the thoughts in a manner fit to set us a-laughing, is more difficult than we generally suppose. Such novels as "Don Quixote," "Gil Blas," "Gulliver," "Oliver Twist," are as difficult to compose as any serious epic poem. The scarcity of a comical turn of mind is yet more visible in its reflection in the fine arts. How few painters were capable of making such caricatures as *Leonardo da Vinci*, and *Hogarth*, the celebrated designer of humorous pictures.

The first characteristic feature of wit is its swiftness; what it is unable to attain at once, at a bound, it will never attain at all. Patience, abiding, perseverance, exertions avail nothing, as is the case with judgment and reason. The second characteristic of wit is, that it excites the laugh, which, according to *Aristotle,* distinguishes man from animals. But what is it that makes us laugh? *Juvenal* says that poverty made a man ridiculous at Rome. *Aristotle* says that a mistake, a flaw, ugliness, any uncouth disproportion that brings with it no suffering, nor is fraught with any danger, may raise laughter; otherwise, if there is any danger in the matter, the stronger feeling of sympathy will mar our inclination to laugh. *Cicero* says that the ludicrous lies in unfitness. *Home*, *Gerard*, *Batteux*, and *Mendelssohn* are of opinion that contrast is the source of the ludicrous; *Moeser*, that it is greatness without power. *Hobbes* defines laughter to be a sudden glory arising from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves by comparison with infir-

mity of others, or our own former infirmity. *Shaftesbury* thinks that furious anger connected with total impotency will not fail to make us laugh. *Priestley* says that things that strike us by their incongruity, will not fail to appear ludicrous. Wit, says *Johnson*, may be more rigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. *Beattie* says that those things will rouse a laugh which are connected in an incongruous and unfit manner. *Sidney Smith* defines wit to be the result of any discovery of surprising relations among our ideas. An unexpected ignorance will raise a laugh. At the dinner of an Englishman in East India, it happened that an uncorked bottle of ginger-beer overflowed, which raised a great wonder of an Indian gentleman who was of the party. "Is there anything so wonderful," asked the angry host, "that the beer is spilled?" "I don't wonder at all," said the Indian, "that it was spilled, only how it was corked and wired down in so small a bottle." *Athenæus* has noted that a certain *Parmeniscus*, a wealthy citizen of Megapontus, went once down the den of Trophonius, but on his return was never seen to laugh. In his anxiety he consulted the Delphic oracle; Pythonissa gave the answer, "that a mother at home will make him retrieve the faculty of laughing." He went to his mother, but to no purpose: he then began to suspect that Pythonissa had deceived him. When at Delos, having seen every thing remarkable of that place, he went into the temple of Latona, where, instead of a fine statue of Apollo, perceiving a clumsy piece of wood, he burst into a laugh. It was thus that the oracle was fulfilled, as he retrieved his faculty of

laughing "in the home of a mother." *Parmeniscus* expecting to see something of exquisite beauty, found a clumsy stump of wood, which, when compared with the ideal beauty present in his mind, made him burst into laughter. We see now that the source of the ludicrous lies in the human mind; that nothing severally apart from others will excite a laugh; that in order to raise in our mind the idea and the feeling of the ludicrous, we must connect two or more things between which there is a striking, unexpected, new, or extraordinary contrast. Weighty sentences put at the beginning of every canto of *Ariosto's* "Orlando Furioso" make us laugh, because they serve as an introduction to a description of slight and nonsensical adventures; whereas such prologues to serious epic poems set us a-thinking.

The laugh being generated in our mind by a display of unusual and unexpected connexions, wit consists in the invention of them; and, in fact, we know by experience, that men of wit perceive analogies, similitudes, and contrasts where nobody thought of looking for them. New relations of ideas flash suddenly in their mind, even when reasoning, and would produce the same pleasure as light, witty things, if their utility and importance did not sometimes overpower the admiration of novelty. In general, all great passions and many other feelings—as, for instance, the idea of utility and of sublimity,—extinguish the relish for wit, or rather the ludicrous of witty conceits. If you pelt a monkey sitting on a lofty cocoa-nut tree, the animal, being very imitative, will pelt you with a cocoa-nut in return. This scheme of gathering cocoa-nuts would appear witty and make us laugh, but for the idea of utility the laugh is very short. We know

that the sandal-tree is imparting its aromatic flavour to the edge of the axe; the comparison of a true Christian rewarding evil with good with a sandal-tree, would be witty, but then it is too sublime, and instead of raising the laugh it elicits feelings of a higher order. A thing that appears ludicrous to one may not raise the same feeling in others; even very uncommon, odd, unwonted associations, to which we have got accustomed from infancy, do not make us laugh; hence it comes that we are more sharp in perceiving the ridicules of others than ours, and that foreigners seize better the national ridicules. Besides, children, fools, dull people will never laugh even at the most ridiculous story. Witty sayings and tales, ingenious thoughts, and most ludicrous conceits, are apt to get antiquated and fade when the allusion is forgot. There are a great many things in *Rabelais* and *Butler* that make us laugh no more, because it is impossible for us to discover their cue; they having, like flowers, lost their sweet scent, though they have conserved their form. *Horace* begins his counsels to a young poet with a description of a picture, which, notwithstanding its oddity, is never able to raise our laugh, although he is mightily sure it wont fail to do it. Two or more things well contrasted will raise our laugh, though taken separately present nothing ludicrous: we find in *Erasmus of Rotterdam* a dialogue of two deaf persons, which raises our laugh, though what each of these two persons says, taken apart, has nothing laughable in it. One has been at sea, whereas the other's mind was wholly engrossed with a wedding.

"*A.* I was told that you received an invitation to the wedding of ——

B. I never had such an unhappy sea-voyage.

A. I hear there was a great deal of company where you visited last night.

B. I never felt so unhappy.

A. Wonderful is the power of wealth, I would see but very few persons come at my wedding, and those among the poor.

B. Just when our ship was under weigh, a strong gale rushed upon us.

A. It must have been a very pleasant society, so many gentlemen and ladies!"

Wit, then, lies in the talent of raising a sudden surprise, in eliciting unwonted association of brilliant images, in facility of associating things apparently unconnected, in readiness of discovering analogies, similitudes and sameness in things and ideas, and is most successful when it bursts from an unexpected ambush, and carries its point by surprise. There are very different ways in which it is displaying itself. There are wits that excel in describing trifles with emphasis and in high-sounding words: others are portraying people who attain great purposes with slight means: others are associating discordant characters, as a miser and a spendthrift: others match little things with great ones, trifles with weighty: others trace out great effects to paltry causes, portraying sham innocence, or candour, or putting real candour in society of the shrewd and perverted. *Sterne* gives a description of the odd family of Shandy, where everything went cross. But it is next to impossible to discriminate all the varieties of wit and humour, fugitive and multiform as they are. There are *vulgar wits*, with whom brilliant repartee, agreeable anecdote, has to make room

for vulgar jokes, home jests, common-place puns, and flippant pleasantries, intended to raise a horse laugh. *Witlings*, who have the ill luck to omit that very circumstance on which depends the success of raillery; there are *small wits*, whose inane attempts to display wit are reduced to truisms, common-place remarks, stale jokes, and insipid pleasantry delivered with emphasis, clearly indicating that they held their witticism for genuine wit; there are also *wits that have run to seed*. *Epigrammatists* embody poetry and wit, and cannot dispense with a sting in the last line. *Bright-witted* man has great originality of conception and ingenious thought, is keenly observant; on every subject that is started, it is next to impossible to guess what he may happen to say; you may see listeners hanging about him with such anxious curiosity as antiquarians over a newly unearthed house of Pompeii. Eminently skilled in narrative art, his stories have a bloom upon them like grapes, but he dislikes reasoning; instead of bringing forth objections, he likes better to pun away the argument. In his very brilliant conversation, he is flying from theme to theme, stealing honey from all; on a sudden, as if afraid that the charm might cloy, he darts forth a sting, but without inflicting a wound. A *ready wit* has his wit at all times under entire control; every possible combination of ideas is always present to his mind, and is able to produce at once whatever he desires. It is impossible to take him unawares or put him out. Such was, among many others, *Foote*. Telling once a story at a fine dinner party, a gentleman, to try him, pulled him by the coat tail, saying that his handkerchief was hanging out; "Thank you, sir," said *Foote*, replacing it, "you seem to know the company better than I do;" and went on with his story.

As *wit* is the noblest, so *humour* is the most agreeable gift of Nature: humour is but a species of wit flowing out of the general turn or temper of the mind, or a natural and predominant predisposition to jocularity; it is running in a vein, and though not startling, it is a very pleasing, exhilarating, and an equable wit, and is displaying itself in actions as well as in words.

A first-rate wit, or an habitual jester, is inexhaustible, having within him the living fountain bubbling upwards by its own force, and gushing out in pure, fresh, and sparkling streams. He never opens his lips except to relate some piquant anecdote, or utter a quaint remark which never fails of eliciting a general laugh ringing with cheerfulness; whereas he, with listless manner, demure aspect, and unconscious looks, seems to be astonished at the efficacity of his jest, and slumbers on the ashes of his own wit. It was remarked that he never gets out of his depth; but if he happens to do it by inadvertence, he has a peculiar knack of extricating himself by a few broken sentences, which convey the impression that he is unwilling to display his learning. There are, moreover, men of wit endowed with the urbane and grateful pleasantry which lightens up and relieves an argument without appearing to trifle with the subject.

There is another kind of men of wit who like to use expressions quite contrary to their purposed meaning, using a kind of rhetorical figure called *irony*. A full description of this kind of wit is given in the following very picturesque and brilliant delineation of *Socrates'* wit:—

"The irony of *Socrates* extends to the whole character which, for the time, he sustains in his whole

course of procedure in stripping and confuting his adversary. It may be not unfittingly expressed by saying, that it is a logical masked battery. Under the disguise, though in a manner amusingly varied, of a character which, in a deeper sense, he sincerely professed—that of being ignorant of every thing but his ignorance—*Socrates* enters the presence of some renowned master of wisdom with the air of a man intellectually poverty-stricken, bankrupt in all science and argument; and after, perhaps, affecting the profoundest veneration of his genius, or listening with an air of admiring stupefaction (as in the "Protagoras") to his gorgeous declamation, he humbly suggests that some little difficulty still occurs to him, which he doubts not so much wisdom can in a moment solve; and begs with all deference, to ask two or three questions—not at all with the idea of disputing the conclusions so cogently maintained, but simply for his own satisfaction. These urbane compliments and this affected humility are expressed with such entire gravity and self-possession, that they add unspeakably to the humour of the dialogue in the eye of those who know his real sentiments and intentions, and often make us wonder at even his power of face: while to strangers, they must infallibly have suggested the idea of perfect sincerity. Indeed, even to those who are behind the scenes, the expressions of compliment and admiration often seem so very grave that, unless we suppose them partly owing to a real admiration of powers, which—though in his judgment perverted, and to which he himself made no pretension—were yet felt to be splendid of their kind, we must confess that the irony of the Platonic *Socrates* sometimes comes as near a barefaced lie, as we should

care to impute to so renowned a lover of truth. The sophist, however, if a stranger, elated by his praises, and charmed with the deference of one who, so far from professing to rival him in his own field, seems rather likely to prove a docile listener than a formidable antagonist, encourages him in a patronizing manner to propose his doubts and difficulties, and assures him of satisfactory and instant solution. *Socrates* thanks him, and generally begins with some question apparently so simple—so stupidly simple, and at such a distance from the field of discussion—that his opponent, no doubt, often hesitates, whether most to admire the docility, or wonder at the stupidity of the querist, and with a complacent smile, half of pity, half of contempt, promptly replies. Other questions succeed faster and faster, more and more difficult, and gradually approaching in one long spiral interrogation the central position, in which the unhappy sophist's argument stands: he now finds it impossible to escape, and, confounded, perplexed, and irritated, discovers that he is compelled to admit some palpable contradictions to his original assertions, and this too by those simple and innocent premises, which he had so unsuspectedly granted. He feels himself within the coils of a logical *boa constrictor*, who binds his folds tighter and tighter, till the poor sophist is absolutely strangled. Often, however, *Socrates* does not proceed to this at once; but, ingenious in the art of tormenting, and liberal of sport to the delighted spectators, he gently uncoils his folds, and suffers his victim to breathe awhile; but only to entangle him again in the same toils. Nothing can be finer than the art with which, in these interludes, *Plato* represents *Socrates* playing (as whalers would

say) with the monster he has harpooned; or as we deal with a fretted horse, patting, and soothing, and conciliating him; turning the conversation for a time to other topics, to remove his victim's suspicions, and let his sullenness and irritation subside; often with the most provoking air of sincerity professing to condole with him on the sudden disappearance of that fine and promising speculation, in which he had hoped to find a satisfaction of his own difficulties; urging him to try again and give another definition, proffering his own assistance in the investigation, and pretending that they will hunt the truth in couples; asking him whether he does not think with him on such and such a point, though we are internally convinced all the time, that the plausible proposition to which he requests the sophist's concurrence will prove of a fallacy in the upshot, and that all the assistance which *Socrates* will render him, will be slily to give his companion's crutch a kick as they go along, and leave him sprawling in the mire." (*Edinburgh Review*, No. CLXXVI.)

There is nothing more delightful than great parts set off by a lively wit; but we know by experience that a refined wit is often met with in company with melancholical temper. *Grimm* informs us, in his correspondence with a German prince, that *Regnard*, and the greater part of comical writers, were bilious and melancholic. *Voltaire*, who was very lively and cheerful, composed tragedies, and the only compositions which proved to be a failure were his comedies, because men that are laughing and those that make us laugh are quite different beings. A man of wit, under the pressure of adverse fortune, generally loses a portion of his playfulness; and in general

wit passes away with youth, health, and fortune. *Cervantes*, the father of gentle humour, is perhaps the only man whose playful wit withstood every adversity of fortune, poverty, misery, and a constant bad luck. His whole life was a constant succession of the most galling adversity and misfortune, of misery and sorrow; fortune never deigned to smile upon him, and yet his work makes laugh every person that can read it. From Duina to Tagus, on the brink of the Mississippi, in the recesses of the gigantic Cordilleras, and amidst Carpathian mountains, the novel of *Cervantes* is read with equal delight by philosophers as well as peasants, judges, and soldiers. There is no work in the whole ancient literature where so ingenious a conception is set off in such a beautiful shape; where a playful, fine, and genteel satire is never tainted by any expression of bitterness or contempt. Every body knows Don Quixote, that highminded gentleman of *la Mancha*, who by constant reading of chivalrous novels has unsettled his mind; imagining that he is living in the age of enchanters and knight-errants he is determined to go in the wake of Amadisses and Rolands, whose wondrous achievements he used to read with such pleasure. Wholly engrossed with such delusion, he puts on a coat of mail and a helmet, and grasping in his sinewy hand a lance, he bestrides an old and lean jade, called Rossinante, and dashes through dells and swamps in search of adventures. Looking at the world through the tinted glass of his delusion, he does not fail to meet at every turn with giants, knight-errants, enchanted castles, and princesses carried off by violence. No disappointments, no mischances, not even hard blows, were capable of undeceiving him and dispelling his infatuation.

A poetical world placed side by side prosaical reality forms the substratum of this delightful picture; moreover, it is the unremittent source of the ludicrous. There is nothing that sets us a-laughing so easily as a mistake; but a person that sees nothing in this world but valiant knights and virtuous princesses is greatly liable to be mistaken. A striking contrast is also very effective in exciting a laugh, and there is nothing so utterly discrepant as poetry and prose, romantic imaginings and prosaical details of everyday life, as the valour of Don Quixote, and the cowardice of Sancho Panza, when in the middle of a pitch-dark night he hears the clattering of a fuller's mill. There is nothing more ludicrous than their adventure at the inns, which Don Quixote never failed to take for enchanted; castles than the contrast between the gravity, gentlemanly manners and speech of Don Quixote, and the grossness and the ignorance of Sancho Panza; between the valour of the knight and his gluttony, between the palace of Armida and a Spanish posada, between an enchanted princess and Maritorna, between the avarice of the squire and the generosity of the knight, who wished to conquer kingdoms but only in order to have the pleasure of appointing Sancho governor of a province. The whole structure of this story is a marvellous creation of wit guided by good taste and a kind heart. There is not one single hateful person in it: we are laughing at the outbreakings of Don Quixote's enthusiasm, at the cowardice, laziness, and prattling of Sancho, but we cannot help liking them. The ludicrous in Don Quixote's story does not offend either religion or good manners, or the feelings of a righteous mind. *Cervantes* knew how to excite interest, keep up the joke, and to con-

nect the merriment generated from the tale with a playful wit, which he exhibits in portraying the characters. Don Quixote and Sancho are living in our mind as a fresh memory of persons dear to us, with whom we have associated for a long time, and whom it is impossible for us to forget.

Swift was a satirical genius of undisputed originality; he displayed great talents for ready wit, was very fond of puns; his powers of conversation and of humorous repartee were unrivalled, and it is remarkable that his shrewd and satirical humour was the last of his mental powers which decayed; but he was never known to laugh, and his smiles looked

> "As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit,
> That it could be moved to smile at anything."
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

The great secret of this pre-eminent humorist, that which gives the edge to his sly strokes of satire, is his unequalled talent of delivering absurd notions or tales without a shadow of verisimilitude, with exact calculations and correct proportions, in the most authentic, honest, and direct terms that are used for the communication of truth and reason, and to luxuriate in all the variations of that grave, plain, and perspicuous phraseology which dull men use to express their opinions. The contrast between the natural ease and simplicity of his style and the stupendous marvels related, forms the great charm of his "Gulliver," and illustrates the nature of his wit.

Irish bulls widely differ from English humour. A bull is an apparent connexion or congruity, and a complete real disconnexion or incongruity of ideas, of which we happened to make an unexpected discovery. An English gentleman was writing a letter in a coffee-

house; perceiving that an Irishman stationed behind him was taking the liberty which *Parmenio* used to take with his friend *Alexander*, he closed his letter with these words, "I would say more, but a damned tall Irishman is reading over my shoulder every word I write." "You lie, you scoundrel!" said the Irishman. But it is useless to say that it is not the tall Irishman that is witty, but the person who has invented and told that story or Irish bull.

CHAPTER IX.

Female Genius.—A witty Miss.

Are then women not only of a different sex, but even of a quite different cast and compass of intellect? Are they in that respect inferior to men? Are we justified in considering the capacities of women as very secondary in the scale of intellect? Is it, then, impossible for them to be gifted with a masculine strength of understanding? Is, then, the superiority of intellect something incompatible with the appropriate virtues of their sex? I will not attempt to present a final solution of such arduous questions.

It has been observed that women who before marriage struck us with admiration from the brilliancy of their intellect, the vividness of their talents, after marriage settle down and seem never to wander from the limits of house and hearth; that none of them have yet attained to the highest eminence in the highest department of intellect. They have no *Newton* or *Bacon*, no *Hume* or *Macaulay*, no *Shakespeare* or *Milton*, no *Burke*, no *Watt*, no *Raphael*, to boast of. But their inferiority in music is more striking and unaccountable, though it is cultivated with great eagerness. Often great as performers, they never excelled in composition; they have never been able

to create the tumultuary harmonies of a *Beethoven*, nor have rivalled the moonlight tenderness of a *Bellini*. Having achieved success in literature, especially in every department of fiction, they, however, never succeeded in humour: the lusty mirth and riotous humour of *Shakespeare*, *Swift*, *Fielding*, *Dickens*, or *Thackeray*, when compared with humourous touches of *Lady Mary Montague*, *Miss Ferriar*, *Miss Edgeworth*, *Miss Austin*, look like a quiet smile opposed to the inextinguished laughter of the Homeric gods.

I heard somewhere, or might have read it, but do not recollect where, that the subtile elements of which the feminine intellect is compound, baffles analysis; that to describe the subtility of a feminine understanding, one must pluck a quill from the wing of a butterfly; that it is by far preferable when a man is more influenced by his reason than by his heart, whereas a woman should rather confide and follow the inspirations of her heart, which will prove to be a more faithful and more to be depended on adviser and guide. For the fulfilment of her homely, modest, circumscribed duties, a plain common sense and a kind heart will answer perfectly; that the most important thing for them is female purity, as tending to produce every other virtue. It is her province to hush helpless infancy into repose, to the infirmity of age to supply the sweetness of cheerful patience, to soothe the querulousness of peevish tempers, to allay the violence of intemperate man, and smooth angry passions; that common sense and a kind heart render higher capacities superfluous in a woman; that higher flights of mind will never promote her felicity, nor render her more amiable and taking; that they might

test their powers on the flowery field of light literature, and should aim at excelling in the knowledge of the beauties and graces of their mother-tongue; that the rugged and thorny ascent up-hill of science is ill-fitted for the drapery of a petticoat; that there is no indispensable necessity for her talking blue; that they may as well leave higher ranges of sciences entirely to man, as more apt to grapple with its difficulties; that such exertions are sure to cover their lovely faces with precocious wrinkles, and induce them to dismiss that characteristic delicacy, the loss of which no attainment could supply; that it is by far more suitable, when we see beaming in their face the lovely feeling of a wife and mother, rather than the traces of the deep thought of a speculative philosopher. These seem to be sober notions on the question at issue.

But what motives may men have to insist upon this exclusive right of cultivating the higher sciences? Why should women be precluded from penetrating into those higher ranges of thought, and from contending for the greater prizes in art, science, and philosophy? Why must she fold quietly her wings, and forswear the consciousness of her powers? But I must confess, I dare not sit in judgment on the compass of the mental capacities of women: there I see my venerable mother, who has laid the foundation of all my head and heart can boast of, smiling at my presumption; there is my amiable, kind-hearted wife: if between us there is any superiority it is certainly not on my side. There are my daughters, of whom I will say nothing, for obvious reasons. Fancy might perhaps conjure up one lovely face more from my poetical age, which happened to bear a close resemblance to the ideal image of grace and beauty. There is a cluster of women, whose souls

Nature has framed in the finer clay, who have added flowers, freshness, and charms to the sterling English literature—there is *Anne Countess of Winchelsea*, *Catherine Phillips*, *Anne Killigrew*, *Mrs. Trollope*, *Gore*, *Grant*, *Thompson*, the daughter of *Herschel* senior, *Mrs. Somerville*, whose name occupies so conspicuous a place in the history of Physical Astronomy, *Miss Louisa Stuart Costello*, *Miss Mitford*, *Miss Martineau*, *Mrs. Norton*, *Fanny Kemble*, *Joanna Baillie*, *Mary Tighe*, *Felicia Hemans*, *Caroline Bowles*, *Mary Howitt*, *Letitia Elizabeth Landon*, *Lady Mary Shepherd*, authoress of works on "Cause and Effect," the authoress of "Jane Eyre," and many more, whose poetry, novels, and tours helped to beguile the time that happened to lie heavy on my hands, procured me great pleasure and profit, and served to purify and ennoble my heart. No, I will not sit in judgment on their capacities; I am not cruel enough to study the physiology of plants by plucking the petals out of a fresh periwinkle or a blushing camelia. No, I prefer leaving the answer to a woman.

"'Without pleasure,' (says a very accomplished novel writer, the German Countess *Hahn-Hahn*, in her novel "Faustine,") "'in that we proposed to execute in good earnest, without a devotion to it, satisfaction in it, triumph in it, nothing great was ever yet accomplished; and what is the quintessence of these feelings, if not inspiration? Inspiration is the electric shock which runs through the chain of existence, and history shows that is only received by men.'

"'Only by men?' interrupted Faustine; 'and the prophetess of the Hebrews! and the Roman matron, who laughed at death! and the priestesses of the Germanic tribes! and the heroines of Saragossa?'

"'I except the mere impulse. When a woman's

heart is touched, when it is moved by love—be it for an individual, for her country, or for her God—then the electric spark is communicated, and the fire of inspiration flames up. But, even then, woman desires no more than to suffer and die for what she loves. No woman was ever excited to the creating, controlling, world-lifting point: no, never; that is never by inspiration. By intrigue, by caprice, likely enough, she amuses herself with these occasionally; But it never yet entered the mind of woman to make her lover immortal, like *Petrarca's* Laura, and *Dante's* Beatrice. They do not even master art, much less science. That woman remains to be born, who is capable of interesting herself for an abstract idea, to the extent of enduring chains and torture for its sake, like Galileo withhis *e pur si muove.* We cannot so much as form a notion of a female Socrates.'"

Allow me to bring forward one more witness for cross-examination, in the person of the late *Rev. Sidney Smith.*

"A great deal," says he, "has been said of the original difference of capacity between man and woman, as if women were more quick and men more judicious, as if women were more remarkable for delicacy of association, and men for stronger powers of attention. All this, we confess, appears to us very fanciful. *That there is a difference in the understandings of the men and the women we every day meet with, everybody, we suppose, must perceive;* but there is none surely which may not be accounted for by the difference of circumstances in which they have been placed, without referring to any conjectural difference of original conformation of mind. As long as boys and girls run about in the dirt, and trundle hoops

together, they are both precisely alike. If you catch up one half of these creatures, and train them to a particular set of actions and opinions, and the other half to a perfectly opposite set, of course their understanding will differ, as one or the other sort of occupations has called this or that talent into action. There is surely no occasion to go into any deeper or more abstruse reasoning, in order to explain so very simple a phenomenon."

Leaving to our readers the judgment of the merits of such sweeping, off-hand argument, we have only to add some few observations of our own.

There is no denying that women have peculiar modes of thought; their imagination is very apt to get the start of their judgment; but their conceptions have their particular charm. Their intellectual powers dwell in, and are developed by, the affections. There are shades of thought and feeling which only women are capable of perceiving and expressing; generally, they excel the men in all the graces of the familiar style, especially in letter-writing, for on no other occasion are the heart and understanding kept so tenderly and playfully near each other. In what is befalling in every-day life, in the discrimination of human character, in tact, and fineness of perception, they are often far superior to men. The discursive faculty is rarely exercised by women, but they have got that fine tact which is exclusively their privilege, and that quick and keen perception and discernment which supply the place of more extensive knowledge of the world, and supersede all reasoning. Their heart, standing always on the watch for every chance word or gesture that might be construed into a prognostic, is warning them diligently of circum-

stances which generally escape the attention of men.* Their minds, saved from the pedantry of books, unencumbered by ponderous learning, not so overstrained as those of men, being more at liberty to follow their natural bent, conserve more of their primitive freshness. They have the air of being led to right conclusions by an intuitive tact; they seem to be endowed with a clear, intuitive knowledge of things, which yields nothing to the acquired perception, and enables them to spring to conclusions and arrive at inferences which excite our astonishment, when compared with the very inadequate means by which they are obtained. When called upon to please, the feminine intellect puts on different shapes, all witchcraft and spells. In the presence of men, it is shy and likes to veil itself; but when roused, it brings forth a strange echo, is very like opal, spreading several rays, through which flow down their imagination and the inmost feelings of their heart.

A witty Miss.—

> While her laugh full of mirth, without any control,
> But sweet one of gracefulness, rung from her soul;
> And where it most sparkled no glance would discover,
> In lip, cheek or eye, for she brightened all over,
> Like any fair lake that the breeze is upon,
> While it breaks into dimples and laughs in the sun.

There is something repulsive in a young person of softer sex that is setting up for a wit. It is in vain

* "The most simple and unsuspicious of the female sex have an instinctive sharpness of perception in matters of love, which sometimes goes the length of observing partialities that never existed, but rarely misses to detect such as pass actually under their observation."—WALTER SCOTT.

that Nature has set upon her its loveliest gifts, a tender heart, and every quality that careful education and good training are able to develop.

There is a sparkling joyousness about her mouth, whenever she is speaking. She is smiling with her eyes, and a world of cutting ridicule and biting sarcasm is lurking in every flash of her lustrous eyes, in every dimple and curve of her features; her graceful figure, her rich complexion, her radiant and abounding hair, presenting one of those faces of witchery which are beyond beauty; but to this Nature has added a fine sense of the ludicrous and a scoffing wit, and thus turned all her qualities to less than nothing. A herd of idle coxcombs is always hovering round her, basking in her smiles, feeding on her laughing words, and listening in rapture to the tone of her silvery voice, when she is uttering smart things at the expense of the company.

She is constantly seeking to hold people up to ridicule; extremely quick-sighted in discovering the ridiculous side of everything, which she takes up swiftly; and though it is not for display, not to degrade and vilify, but merely for enjoyment that she is giving expression to the most biting and caustic satire, it shocks, however, the feeling of every well-regulated mind, to see her endeavouring to be smart, even on sacred things, to ridicule persons whose age and high merit she is in duty bound to respect; but she will make any sacrifice in the world, except that of a jest, drollery, pun, or a nickname. Nothing will depress or tame down her spirits; her playful railleries, ironical compliments, and sometimes a home-jest, raise a perennial and general laugh ringing with cheerful-

ness, as she is apt to give a playful shape and a cheerful appearance even to the most serious thought. She seems to sit in an atmosphere of sparks, wielding like an enchantress her power over the whole society, not one person having the courage to oppose the shield of cool reason to the shafts of her wit, which is gushing forth unremittingly from her rosy lips. She is delighted at seeing a merriment in every feature, a smile on every countenance, and hearing chuckles around her; but is not aware of reproaches hidden at the bottom of her hearers' hearts, and seems to forget that those who laugh do not always approve. It is then in vain that the goddess of beauty has endowed her with every charm of beauty and attraction; the dazzling brightness of her wit prevents from seeing the enchanted girdle. She is exciting wonder and joy in every mind, but could not touch the heart of any; and though everybody is extolling her playful wit, all recoil from the heart, though kind, good, and devoted, and are frightened by her headstrong temper; for, as *Lord Lyttelton* says: "Women, like princes, find few real friends."

However, we often meet with witty persons of the fair sex more reserved, sober-minded, and having more mastership over the flow of their spirits. With a calm, soft address, they have got a smooth way of jeering; their raillery is like the lightning—vivid, but not scorching. Trying sometimes at wit, they have but gentle touches. Having a quick eye both for the beautiful and for the ridiculous, a keen but chastened humour, which rises often to wit, they throw out their observations in terse and vivid phrases, but are more quiet. Their discourse is full of winged words,

ingenious thoughts, delicate and gentle raillery, light jests, and oblique inuendos; but their wit has no sting: they never use indiscriminately every weapon in their armoury; and thus dazzling our mind by the mild brilliancy of their wit, they yet retain all their means of touching our heart and inspiring respect.

CHAPTER X.

Dawn and youth of the Intellect. Natural History of Scepticism.—A Sceptic.—A Pirrhonist.—A Dogmatist.

Nasce per quello a guisa di rampollo
A piè del vero, il dubbio.
DANTE. Canto IV.

To a heart untouched by grief, to a mind not visited as yet by any misgivings, the world presents itself coloured in golden hues. A young man has an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, wishes and hopes to know all, is confident in virtue, has a heart open to every feeling, indulges in any hope. There is not so high a pitch of perfection; not so towering a superiority or excellence, which he is not sure of attaining. His whole face beaming with animation, he looks cheerfully upon the world where every thing is new to him; seems gay, radiant, and buoyant as his own youthful heart. Any thing is capable of exciting his wonder and admiration, and makes him fall into ecstasy. He is like the traveller standing on the Swiss mountain, *Righi*, from the top of which he for the first time perceives the sun suddenly starting from behind the rocky mountains, gilding with rosy tints the lofty glaciers and the virgin snow of the *Jungfrau*, and discovering seven blazing lakes amidst an undulated, studded with wood, and very fine country. Youth of mind, youth of reason! serenity of soul! Happy the man to whom it was given to

abide for a time in this paradise of innocence, who was allowed to take a long walk and enjoy himself upon these flowery meadows. But alas! man's happiness is evanescent. Our mental powers are not allowed to be stationary. We are unable to keep for ever that happy balance of senses and intellectual faculties existing only for a moment in our youth. Ere long, the youthful reason begins to expand and spread its wings, though in a manner as slow and imperceptible as the development of the petals of a rose-bud.

Even that progress is ac com nied by the golden hope of our youthful days. A young man does not even suspect that there are certain limits to our knowledge: he goes a-head with a joyous heart, and, notwithstanding great difficulties which are obstructing his way, his enthusiasm continues as yet unabated. Guided by the hand of experienced teachers, he proceeds upon the main road, never swerving from the well-trodden pathway, is taught to comprehend the thoughts of others, makes use of ready-made arguments, is proceeding from words to their correspondent ideas, and from these, his attention is directed to their relative objects. He is only taking notice of such things as were marked out and chosen for him. Though wearing, as yet, leading-strings, his mind was alive to the novelties of the external world. But after a certain time of such a passive intellectual life, he experienced a very faint foreshadowing of a coming change, he felt in his mind something new going on, every day he was acquiring some more general notions. New trains of idea have been opened to him; his mind was teeming with suggestions. The horizon of his intellect begins insensibly to expand;

the depths of his mind had been stirred by this incessant tide of new ideas and their checkered transmutations; there are streaks of light breaking in the distance, that already give a new aspect to much that was known to him, and which will ultimately reveal much that is yet obscure: he relies now with more confidence on his own faculties of apprehension and reasoning: he starts boldly in quest of knowledge, with some strange presentiments; and feeling instinctively the approaches of his spiritual emancipation, he is anxious to put his abilities to the test. Before such an emancipated intellect and expanding intelligence, the great system of opinions, religious as well as political, in which he had been born and nurtured, begins to tremble: he is now for the first time aware that there are different opinions current among men: he sets about comparing and examining opinions and notions which he had blindly adopted: he found among them some that could not stand the test of close examination; it is for the first time that a doubt starts up in his mind; it is for the first time that he is wavering in his belief, and that his confidence is shaken; it is for the first time that he begins to have a dim notion of the difference there is between knowledge and faith. He is puzzled at the sight of this unlooked-for phenomenon, recoils with horror from the dreary thought, and feels a strange cold thaw upon his heart. But this novel and painful wavering will soon grow into doubt, which, spreading its venom round, assumes gigantic outlines, overruns his whole stock of knowledge, and casts a shade over his soul, which till now enjoyed the full light of a mid-day sun. A deep haze has settled now over primal truths, which he has

been accustomed to see as bright, serene, and unchangeable as the stars of the firmament. Unsuspected till now and unknown objections started into sudden existence, and filled the whole sphere of his mental vision. He came on unawares at a cross-way, where two roads are branching in a contrary direction, the one leading to limits where knowledge ends and faith is beginning, the other is ending with an abyss of an universal and eternal scepticism. Now his mind was laid open either to credulity or scepticism, or to incessant wavering among those extremes, at times putting an implicit belief in what occasionally came to his knowledge; then, seeing so great a discrepancy in the opinions of men, feeling himself unable to reconcile so different principles and jarring opinions, launched into the ocean of speculative inquiry, without the anchorage of the supreme authority of Holy Writ, he began to despair of the powers of the human intellect, believed himself bereaved of means apt to uphold the great truths that lie at the basis of religion and morals, and thus, driven forth on a boundless ocean of doubt and perplexity, he came on the verge of universal scepticism.

"What is the ultimate end of our being in this world, where man never is, but always to be, happy, though born with strong desire and, I may say, aptitude to happiness? But this our life is but a state of probation, say they. What have I done to be put in a state of probation? Why should I, for instance, be obliged to live under the government of an egotistical tyrant, who tramples upon humanity? Why is the serpent permitted to creep into Paradise? Why comes it to pass, that when our most ardent wishes are accomplished, we are cloyed soon, and loathe the very thing

we so much longed for? But this comes out of the wickedness of our nature—it is only our bad propensities that make us unhappy. Have I endowed myself deliberately with those bad or any other propensities? Did I ever wish to be born at all? No, I was born in spite of me. I am put under the influence of my innate passions, quite as overbearing as is the influence of the climate in which I am living. I once thought that the acquisition of a deep and extensive knowledge, that the improvement and enlargement of my mental faculties may forward my happiness; but alas! I am compelled to envy the cats and dogs who suffer also—but only the present evils—who never mood over the past and are never troubling themselves with anxiety about the future. I soon found out that the tree of knowledge is not that of life or happiness. Why was it planted at all?

"Why are we living on a globe whose crust is comparatively not thicker than a sheet of paper, with an eternal fire burning and glaring underneath, and occasionally searching an issue through Vesuvius or Etna? but as if it was not enough to have an abyss of everlasting fire beneath your feet, you may be crushed to atoms by a shower of stones falling from the heavens, weighing many thousand pounds, that breaks the trees, pulls down houses, and ploughs up the ground. There is pestilence, there is cholera, there is a long list of dreadful and loathsome diseases, with Greek names to them; there are overflowing rivers, falling mountains that cover a whole village with rocks and dust; there are earthquakes that change a *Messina* or a *Lisboa* into a heap of ruins, and destroy wantonly the whole of a fertile country, the hope and resources of thousands of human beings. And yet we

are told that all things here in the shape of animals, plants, are for our exclusive use. But who is so blind as not to be aware that our right to all these is quite the same as the right of *Ferdinand Cortez* to the empire of *Montezuma?* Man, on the contrary, seems only to be an intruder trespassing on the premises of this earth . . . ." and so he went on uttering words of despondency, without ever looking into the book of *Sextus Empiricus*, an arsenal of sceptical weapons.

Such is the state of a youthful mind visited with scepticism, though not yet wholly subdued by it. Premature revolt from human authority proves always to be an incipient rebellion against conscience, reason, and truth.

Happy the man who, having past the dangers of this small-pox of intellect, perceives the limits which it is not given to our understanding to infringe—limits so easily discernible in our sense of sight—props some of his convictions with new arguments and remains faithful to others: as the existence of God, the moral government of the world, the divine origin of Christianity, and all truths of this stamp, which, though unable to be demonstrated with the closeness to which we are accustomed in the sciences of magnitude and number, are, however, strongly supported by moral evidence, and constitute faith, which in its turn is the source and foundation of religion. And here we cannot help admiring the wisdom of the Creator in the structure of our intellect: we see that its range and reach is commensurable to all necessities of our intellectual and moral life, and is just as intense as is necessary, but no more; that what we cannot *know*—for it is not always that we

may grope our way to conviction by the help of reasoning and irrefragable arguments—we are rendered capable of *believing*. Though assailed and surrounded by many doubts, we however know well our moral duties, and, if not infatuated or in a state of delusion, we are never at a loss to know what we should have done; and there are convictions that cannot be reasoned away or stifled in our mind. Happy the man who, endowed with masculine good sense, having ascertained the limits of the human understanding, is believing in all that cannot be honestly denied, in what we wish most eagerly to be proved beyond all doubt, sets other notions among the probabilities and surmises, and, having roughed and weathered it, takes shelter in a quiet harbour; in questions lying beyond our limits, seeks a refuge in religion; and thus, not exposed to the jarring antagonism between his conscience and his reason, his mind is never puzzled with doubts which we are not allowed either to lay aside with indifference or to solve satisfactorily, and escapes that dreadful mental malady—"chronic scepticism."

In acting, we must not end, but begin, with hesitating; but there are minds incessantly wavering, unable to incline either to one side or the other. Such an intellect is inexhaustibly fertile of objections, never tired with finding out new difficulties, never at a loss to discover some new reasons for gainsaying the most plain truths; such men are suspended amidst two contrary opinions, having confidence neither in their own judgment nor in that of others. It is not without the greatest exertion that they make at last a choice of the end as well as of the means for carrying it out. This difficulty of determination

makes them prone to procrastination; they hope the next day might bring a solution to their doubts. We often meet with such a mental bias in good and kind-hearted people, but of weak character, who anxiously desire to do their best. Such a wavering person is a plague of men of ready wit, who trouble themselves with devising means able to overcome the supposed impediments; for a procrastinating and wavering man is always ready to spy out some new difficulty and obstacle: he is by half not so clever in devising means as he is in discovering lets and hindrances. Men of dull faculties are wavering in the choice of aim, clever men in that of ways and means: the first do not know where to go, the second which way. Such is the face of scepticism in the daily pursuits of life; but let us look up to men with such a bias of mind, when they set about searching the solution of the highest questions of philosophy.

In the childhood and youth of mankind, everything has a fresh and vivid appearance and is full of reality; thoughts and ideas present as much evidence in our conscience as their relative things, as the feelings and pleasures of our youthful days. There is nothing, in that happy, but transitory moment of life, we may prove inclined to call in question: we have no misgivings neither about our feelings and thoughts, nor about the world around: we never suspect any possibility of delusion: fully satisfied with what we know, we pass our lives in happy contentment.

But as we are approaching the age of reason, when, by dint of sad experience, we have detected and learned to know the mistakes of our reason, the delusions of our heart, hesitation and doubt begin to dawn upon us. At every turning new doubts start up in our

mind. Employed in the search of indisputable truth and reality, we were astonished to know less than in the outset. The external world begins to lose its freshness, its brilliant and enchanting hue, with which it was adorned by the innocence of our mind. An awful silence reigns around; there is at last nothing left untainted by doubt, if we except something indeterminate, which there is no term in any language to express. Ere long, distrust and doubts begin to overflow our soul; the ideas appear like dreams, as shadows issued forth from the bottom of our mind; the soul itself appears like a glossy surface on which various figures make their appearance and vanish, or is like the tracings on veined marble, mere random-lines and tints, and entangled strokes out of which a lively fancy may shape any image. There is a moment in our intellectual life, when we call nothing in question; there may come a sudden invasion of doubt.

First doubts about the reality of our knowledge grow upon us very slowly and with great difficulty. Some persons may happen to discover some motives to call into question some truths or some facts, but are never suspecting the evidence of senses, of experience, and of reason; most men die without having had a shadow of suspicion of that kind. But doubts of the evidence of reason once roused in our mind, spread swiftly to every department of our knowledge, overrun the whole mind, dispersing everywhere its venom, and not leaving one single truth uncontaminated.

But there are a great many and very mysterious gradations from absolute belief or credulity to absolute and general scepticism; and though the tracing

of that wondrous path is connected with very great difficulties, we will not recoil from trying our hand at it, in the hope of giving our readers a more complete insight into the bias of human intellect.

At the outset, we do not distinguish the objects from their relative ideas; there is as yet no visible distinction between us and the outward nature. By degrees we are enabled to make a right distinction between objects, but we do not distinguish ourselves from our ideas: we do not as yet well perceive the difference existing between the ideas and their corresponding objects; but with time we learn to distinguish ourselves from our ideas and their corresponding objects. Farther, we are led to make a distinction between two kinds of ideas: those whose source lies without our mind, which are generated in our mind unexpectedly, against our will or wish, which we cannot change or metamorphose at our pleasure: as, for instance, the idea generated by the sight of a rattlesnake, a bear, or an elephant. These ideas are called *concrete*. But there are other ideas that are generated within our mind: among their number, there are ideas with which our reason was primitively outfitted, which constitute reason itself, which are singled out, enumerated, and classified by *Aristotle*, *Kant*, and *Reid*, which may not be augmented at our pleasure. These are called *primary* ideas or first principles, which are as eyes to our understanding. But there are other ideas, also generated in our mind, which are of our own making, whose number we may augment at our pleasure, whose generality is of different compass, as enlarging or contracting circles raised on a glossy water by a dashed-in pebble,—ideas which are the result of our reasoning by induction or analogy,

or appear to be the offspring of different propensities, bias, and deficiencies of our intellect, and the degree of its culture.

We learn to distinguish two circumstances in the *concrete* ideas, which were generated in our minds by external objects. One part we refer to objects, and put on account of their qualities or properties; the next part, which rouses in our mind agreeable or disagreeable sensations, we refer to ourselves: the first procure us the knowledge of external world by means of senses; the second are our personal feelings, generated by external objects. Among general ideas, which are of our own making, we distinguish those which are the work of imagination, as fictions or fancies, from those that are the produce of reason, as general truths, general ideas of a different compass. The knowledge of the exterior world by the means of senses, has given us the first idea of reality, independent of our ideas, which were born on their account. At first, we have not the slightest doubt that some real objects correspond to our concrete ideas: we cherish the same belief in our feelings, in the fancies of our imagination, and the thoughts of our reason.

Fancies, fictions of imagination, gave the first knowledge of subjective reality, which, though it may not exist in external world, is nevertheless for us a reality: the presence of these ideas in our mind cannot be called in question: they have often a very great intensity, cannot be removed or dismissed at pleasure, but stick to our mind, clouding it, blending and producing a strange infatuation or hallucinations.

The difference between such ideas and the evidence of senses—difference impossible to be accounted for, but nevertheless irrefragable—might have been the

primitive motive for denying the existence of the external world. This first step towards scepticism led to another. Men were soon aware that all our feelings are personal or subjective only; that pleasure, with all its shades, is only in the person who feels it and enjoys, and not in the object that caused it to be roused; for the same thing makes often quite a different impression upon our mind, according to our age, time, and circumstances. If, then, one and the same thing proves to give us pleasure at one time, and at another to be painful, pain and pleasure are not universal and permanent qualities of things, which seem to generate them; however, the evidence of senses, universal ideas, general truths, kept up as yet an objective quality in our estimation. But men soon learned that senses lead us very often into error, and create delusions. However, at the outset, only the evidence of some senses was called in question: it was believed, that mistakes and blunders of one sense may be corrected by means of others; that the mistakes of all senses may be ascertained by our reason; and, thus controlled and directed by it, they may yet give us correct notions about the external things. In order to reason away the whole external world, it was necessary to proceed one step more.

Men began now to inquire whether qualities ascertained by tact—as form, size, and impenetrability of bodies—are merely relations of these bodies to us, as the feelings of sweetness and bitterness, cold and heat, pain and pleasure. It is impossible to prove it; but the contrary statement has no better foundation. This uncertainty produced the startling doubt about the existence of external world.

The *universal* ideas—which were brought in com-

parison with *concrete* ideas, in order to form a judgment—were also called in question as soon as their source was discovered: for, seeing that they are the result of mere abstraction, that they arose from ascertained analogies marked by one term, men began to question whether there may be in the external world anything corresponding to those universal ideas. A man, a tree, is nowhere to be found: we perceive in Nature nothing but unities. There is, then, no real thing corresponding to those universal ideas. It was, however, argued in their defence, that, being abstracted from real things, they must have retained a kind of reality, because they have necessarily a relation with something real; but as it is impossible to ascertain closely in what this relation consists, men began to question whether they have got any relation at all. From that time, they were only considered as forms subservient to the classification of concrete ideas.

We have now but one more stroke to give to finish the genealogy of scepticism. The only thing left untouched till now were *primary* ideas, which, not being the result of abstraction, constitute the foundation of all our reasonings; but the doubt which has undermined the universal ideas did not fail to overrun these also: for, in order to ascertain their nature, it was found necessary to trace back their source, their genealogy, which is hidden in a dense mist. Do they proceed from the object, or from the subject? or are they the result of both? Who is able to ascertain it?

The primary ideas, as the ideas of time and place, or the necessary connexion of cause and effect, seem to be endowed with the character of universality and necessity; but is it an absolute universality and necessity, or only a relative one, or only a comparative one?

If they have an absolute reality, how did they come to acquire such a wonderful quality? Which means as much as if one had put the question—What is human reason? What is it capable of? and what confidence may we put in its evidence? No solution of that question has been found satisfactory, and did not generate conviction. Thus, even the primary principles had been called into question,—principles that served as the basis to all our arguments. Then scepticism has reached the last limits, for upon these principles all our knowledge is founded; pulling them down, you annihilate even our consciousness. Such is the genealogy of scepticism, a mental excrescence not unlike a parasite plant, which absorbing the sap of the tree makes it wither.

There are two kinds of sceptical disquisitions and two sorts of sceptics. When they regard the mysterious connexion of cause and effect, or the most striking causes of an external world, or of existence itself, they may amount either to a denial of the possibility of any evidence on these questions, or only to a denial of some particular species of proof. Of the first sort were, among many others, *Bishop Berkeley* and *Arthur Collier*, who boasted of having demonstrated the absolute impossibility of external world. *Descartes* tolerated the belief in the external world only on account of the irresistible inclination of mankind to believe its existence. *Hume*, in his philosophical writings, is one of the boldest and highest sceptics, but in his private letters descends to the lower class of those who only deny some particular species of proof. He seems to have been afraid of asserting: he not only anxiously avoids dogmatism, absolute statements, but seems to consider it as some-

thing against good breeding and decency, exposing a serious man to scoffs of wits, and degradation in the opinions of men: he shrinks from a mere shadow of dogmatism, as we do from loathsome animals, serpents, and toads. In his *Essays*, as well as in his History, you always find him exerting himself to the very verge of abilities, in order to obliterate with the left hand what the right had written, and this by dint of *ifs* and *perhaps's*, and is never satisfied till he has left the reader at a loss to know what really his opinion was.

It is among the most wonderful dispositions of Providence, that an uncultivated mind is free from the evils generated by scepticism: for it is only men of higher parts, careful education, profoundly versed in sciences, men apt of discerning and estimating the evidences of truth, feeling the nature and extent of the objections opposing it,—only such superior men enjoy the sad privilege of turning sceptics. One must at some time have doubted the existence of matter, to have any turn for metaphysics, *Turgot* justly observes. In fact, the opinions of sceptics being by their nature without enthusiasm or appeal to the passions, can never gain proselytes. Literary men of profound habits of thought, but labouring under the disadvantages of a gloomy temperament, are liable to transient fits of doubt and misgiving, or sudden invasions of scepticism; in these momentary fluctuations, when the cloud hangs low upon their minds, they sometimes understate the evidence on which their belief was founded, and lose sight of those fundamental principles which were settled in their minds, seemingly put beyond any doubt, and constituted their strong convictions; but so vast and elaborate was the basis of

argumentation on which they rested, these truths were the result of so accumulated proofs by induction, or dependent on so quite separate trains of argument, which the mind is unable to retain for ever, or see at a glance, that to re-examine their texture, and ascertain the coherence of the materials of which they were wrought, forms the still recurring labour of the whole life: thus in some unhappy mood of mind, those persons are left at the mercy of doubt and permitted to give it an undue advantage.

A *Sceptic*, in the love of paradox, wishes to prove everything uncertain; is not inspired with an intense love of truth, and never in sincere search of it: he prefers refuting, redarguing, instead of proving; has no confidence in the evidence of senses as well as of reason: he knows only that he knows nothing: very clever when it comes to call anything in question, he is never able of forming a conviction: he is never advancing an opinion, never asserting, but always in search of arguments for and against: he likes to hang in the air upon a tiny thread, balancing all the reasons on both sides, and is lying like a spider in his trembling web, till some new argument comes to disturb his fluctuations. Then, as if aroused from slumber, he strains every nerve in order to grapple with those arguments, and puzzles his brains to espy some new uncertainty; he sits mooding, ruminating, till he has contrived to undermine the last foundation of certainty, stifled and smothered every conviction, and overrun the world with doubts. Straining every nerve to controvert the certainty of principles perceived by intuition, and show that they cannot he demonstrated by reasoning, he boasts of having successively converted them. Always dissatisfied with the result of his investigation,

he is perpetually questioning, contending, arguing, confuting, on all subjects—not excepting those great moral truths, which hope and faith, as well as reason, seem to carry beyond the mere domain of intellect, which it would be ignominious to set down as false, and which nature worthy of immortality would wish to be proved.

The sceptic not only maintains that we cannot arrive at some great principles by demonstration, but even that there is no sufficient evidence for their support. He seems to forget that we come to the knowledge of truth not only by the way of reasoning, but that we are capable of discerning the first principles by intuition, which is a vivid and luminous power of apprehension. There are some intuitive principles that we cannot doubt consistently with honesty. These principles not being discovered by reasoning, cannot be by reasoning subverted: the ideas of time, space, number, matter, motion, have as strong certainty as reasoning can impart. Besides, all must stand, and base its argument, on the perceptions of intuition, feeling, and common sense. Principles are perceived, propositions are deduced; each of these two processes is certain, though in different modes. Reasoning is not entitled to require of feeling and perception proofs of these first principles, before she assents to them; but, on the other hand, perception has equally no right to require from reason an intuitive impression of all the propositions at which it arrives. Each of these faculties, in its proper circle, promotes the solution of the highest and most serious questions, and in its own way resolves the doubts which must have often agitated our inquiring mind.

As for moral principles, let us not place our impli-

cit confidence in our inadequate, hesitating, and cautious, though subtile reason, but rather trust and yield to a noble instinct that is lurking in our soul: that it must be true, which it would be ignominy to believe false, and which an honest man would wish to be proved beyond any doubt. There are very few subjects on which evidence can be said to be demonstrative; but as there is sufficient evidence to form the belief and determine the conduct of man in all the ordinary affairs of life, we have no right to reject that same species and degree of evidence in the more important subjects—as for instance, in the fundamental truths of moral philosophy and religion. We, then, must carefully discriminate primary and undemonstrable truths, discovered to us by that spontaneous intuition of reason called instinct or feeling, from truths which are deduced from them by the method of reasoning, or which we draw from experience by induction. The former imply faith; the latter are convictions generated by reasoning.

Though a man of genius, in whose soul faith and knowledge have sent down deep roots, unable to live among unceasing doubts, will never turn a sceptic, and let his opinions oscillate in a state of contented suspense between Christianity and scepticism; however, sceptics are generally found among men of learning, deep thought, and expert in dialectics; a fool, an unschooled and uncultivated man, a poor genius, is never in danger of turning out a sceptic.

There is no propensity of mind having a closer relation and greater influence upon our moral feelings. Men of strong and steadfast moral character want to know with certainty, and to base their convictions upon an incontrovertible foundation; their moral cha-

racter does not agree with great subtilty of reasoning, and prevents their mind from giving itself up to scepticism. Whereas weak-minded men, unable to stand fast to their purpose, have a certain secret propensity to doubting and wavering, which, if it is not the source, is certainly the first movement towards scepticism. As a weak mind united to an active intellect is leading to scepticism; so, on the other hand, it is more obvious that scepticism bereaves the mind of all vigour and strength, and turns us adrift on the world, leaving us unprotected and unsheltered against its snares, and the assault of passions, and mistaken notions: for, to wish and to act, a man must have strong, or at least sufficient motives, to push him—motives which may be only generated in a strong conviction, and which remain quite unknown to a sceptic. Strong desires spring forth in an ardent mind; but scepticism, freezing all feeling of our heart, renders us indifferent about everything, because doubtful and uncertain, and makes us unable of every exertion, of steadiness in our determinations, and renders us incapable of self-sacrifice. We must not expect friendship or patriotism from a sceptic. Why should he put his life in jeopardy, expose himself to any danger, when he broods the greatest doubts as to the expediency of the aim, as well as of the sufficiency of means! Persuaded that our intellect, strong enough for discovering error, is not up to proving any of his supposed truths, he exhibits the most insulting indifference for every impending question, and is well content to leave it unsolved. Through the long annals of sceptical philosophy, no single name is to be found to which the gratitude of mankind has been yielded, or is justly due.

Anxiously pointing out every mistake, oversight, or chasm in the arguments, he never troubles himself with upholding the truth by a new evidence. Detecting many faults and mistakes in the performances of others, he is unable to enrich the science with new ideas and discoveries; his presumption in rejecting even the facts, without the close examination of their truth, is sometimes more injurious to science than an unquestioning credulity: for it has a tendency to impede accurate investigation.

He is very disagreeable in society, an enemy to every noble inspiration or enthusiasm, and a great egotist. He is making ruins, without having ever built anything. He is wiping out with his left hand what the right had written. He sees nothing clear but the obstacles, is only fertile in doubts and clever expedients to escape deciding, is never prompt to act, but ever ready to oppose. He vents the greatest dislike against, and is looking with a sarcastic sneer at those who presume to advance or assert. His face is beaming with scornful pity to those who venture to believe anything, and find a consolation in hope. He would fain instil doubts in every mind, and, like a torpedo, benumb whoever has touched him. His mind, unmanned and doubt-tossed, finds at last no refuge, except in a voluntary blind credulity, as was the case with *Pascal.* His religion, a most exhilarating feeling in the breast of a man with rational faith, was a bitter fruit reared in a region desolated by doubt, under the arid breath of despair. Thus we often find men with a speculative turn of mind, given to, or enslaved by, vulgar prejudices, and placed in frequent antagonism with their acute and powerful intellect. His brain reels incessantly; long ago the

sun had ceased to shine on his heart. Wearing within himself a barrenness of spirit, he is but his own soul's sepulchre; and his intellect is like a pathless comet, still rolling on, but without an orbit and without a course.

It may be presumed that there never existed an *absolute* Pirrhonist, or else he would have been in doubt about everything; he would doubt that he is awake, or that he is pinched or burnt, he would doubt that he is doubting, and even of his own existence.

A dogmatist.—The sceptic inquires, whereas the dogmatist is only proving. The *sceptic* is undermining all evidences of truth; in order to prove that they are not only incontrovertible, but impossible to be proved by reasoning: a *dogmatist* never deigns to examine the first principles: he is only exerting himself to prove what he has boldly asserted; in order to do it, the dogmatists have invented a science called *Dialectics*, which occupied exclusively the minds of the learned during the whole of the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER XI.

A MISCARRIED GENIUS.

Confession of a hot-headed young man of great parts, exhibiting a history of his mind in its different moods and phases.—Confessions of DESCARTES *and* ALGAZEL, *French and Arabian philosophers.*

HOT-HEADED persons are startling us sometimes with some of the most set of propensities and bias of genius, and render themselves remarkable by some of its delusions; but mere enthusiasm, mere bursting forth of some blazing and highly-coloured thoughts, mere high aspirations of the heart and flights of imagination, mere headstrong readiness to trespassing upon the premises of the unknown, or coping and grappling with the greatest difficulties in art and science, do not constitute genius.

Our "miscarried genius" suffered no lack of every advantage and blessing that a splendid rent-roll, a high lineage, a careful education, a cultivated mind, a tender heart, and a lovely countenance can bestow, and nevertheless the whole of his life was an uninterrupted chain of disappointment, grief, and sorrows. His lively imagination, which on the slightest occasion spreads out widely his golden wings, misled by his too over-bearing passions, coloured everything above or below the truth. Creations

of so buoyant a faculty, strong feelings of the heart, roused by uncontrollable passions running fast after it, blew up in his fervid mind a conflagration which his reason was not strong enough to master. This was the unremitting source of his misfortunes, under circumstances that seemed to secure him contentment, if not felicity. Just at that stage of life when reason sets about waging a serious and protracted war with passions, an artful person of cold and calculating mind, having a great start over him in the experience of the world, stirred up in the depths of his inward being sentiments as yet unknown to him, and succeeded in inspiring him with a violent passion. It was but a common-place person, remarkable only by a great habit of dissimulation, besides unable either to feel the warmth of his love, or to conceive its violence; in fact, it was the person in the world least qualified to return the affection of an enthusiastic young man. But he cherished the creation of his own fancy. In the presence of this bright picture of all that is virtuous, lovely, and bewitching, the suggestions of reason, and the dim light of common sense were overseen and despised. There was a great struggle between a love created by the delusions of imagination and the love of his parents,—never to be obliterated in a kindred heart and a righteous mind—till an unexpected circumstance released him from this bondage; though it was very long before he was freed from the power of her charms. Unable to conserve a soft memory of this buried love, when the flush of fire subsided, and the mad intoxication of the eve had given place to the aching and remorseful lassitude of the morning, he tore the links of that overpowering affection asunder. With his hand

supporting his chin, he sat in that mood, when books cannot amuse, nor music lull, nor luxury soothe; his eyes fixed on vacancy, he seemed feeding in silence the thoughts that flitted to and fro athwart a brain without a guide, a deserted mansion where wild spirits had taken up their haunted and desolate abode. But the tide of his feelings, yielding only to necessity, was now running fast into a contrary extreme; from that time, he avoided carefully the society of women and hated them. The eye of his mind released from the spell which obtruded its sight, was unwilling to gaze at the cause of its delusion. Roused from that delightful dream, ejected by force from this bewitching world, he sought refuge in a solitary place, and set on writing poetry, to sing away his gloomy thoughts; the usual recourse of heart-stricken persons.

Having embodied in words some fine feelings and wild fancies, and dipped his pencil in rainbow hues, the colours of his style for the gaudy, changeful, and startling effect, resembled the display of fire-works in the dark, and like them, had neither durability nor keeping; but while his feelings lay deep in his heart, his performances came out to be chilly and void; his affluence of mind refused to flow into words. He had the soul of the poet and poet's nature, without the poet's vent to his emotions, the poetical susceptibility and the cravings, but not its consolations and rewards; he did not possess the magic wand, to give to his visions a shape and a substance. The dimness of unexpressed poetical sensation hovered over his whole existence, wrapped him in the land of dreams, brought the thirst for the ideal, made him fastidious, reeking, and despising, deadened his soul to active

life, and induced the vague and restless dissatisfaction with the world.

His muse flitted through ether without aim; his mind was of too fiery a quality to repose for any continuance on the probable or the true; it soared beyond the visible sphere to the strange and impossible. Disdaining the ties of mortal mould, he shook off the trammels of sense and custom, ransacked his brains for incongruities. All his compositions were a confused embodying of vague abstractions, full of obscurity, extravagance, bewildering labyrinths, straining after impossibilities, abortive attempts at originality, though sometimes flushed all over with the rich fancy, and bestrewn with flowers intoxicating by their sweetness.

Meanwhile the wounds of the heart began to scar. The distractions offered by travelling contributed the most to obliterating love and its consequent poetical mood. He saw Venice and Rome, the ruins of fallen greatness; Paris and London, thronged capitals of modern Europe: the Italian cities made him thoughtful and melancholic; Paris and London displaying before him the futility and shallowness of the great world contributed greatly to his disenchantment,—he felt less inclination for poetry in his mind, as the light of knowledge broke in upon him; as the outline of certainty became more and more definite, the shades of probability more and more distinct, he felt less inclination for poetry in his mind. The hues and the phantoms which poetry called up, grew fainter; the spell was broken; his imagination folded its wings and disappeared, as it is not given to us to unite the incompatible advantages, the clear discernment of truth and the exquisite en-

joyment of fiction. He now took to the study of positive, strict sciences, with great moderation at the outset, but unwilling to begin with the elementary parts of it, he plunged at once into a mass of heterogeneous matter, in the hope of seeing new lights constantly breaking upon him. At first history and critics engrossed his attention; but these proved too sober for his fiery genius: he soon fell in with books less easy to be read with profit by persons that did not undergo in their youth a regular school training; his studies pursued at random, though often deep, soon gave to his intellect an unsound direction: he first began with chemistry and astronomy, then plunged rashly into deeper and deeper, and obtuse inquiries of moral philosophy and metaphysics, without any clue to guide him through their labyrinths. He was thus wandering at random, till, in his heedless progress, he stumbled upon the limits of the human intellect, and entered a ground still more shadowy and benighted; his restless mind, pushed on by curiosity, made him leave the accustomed sphere of intellect. In the spacious circuit of his musing, extending its excursions into the supersensual and supernatural regions, he found himself amidst the darkness and mazes of astrology, alchymy, the supernatural philosophy of *Plotinus* and mysticism, doctrines more congenial to his genius, rousing his imagination, which was lying dormant, and exciting it to a display of its golden wings. The old secret of the alchymist and even arcana, yet more gloomy and less rational, became the subject of his serious contemplation; he delivered himself wholly up to that fearful and charmed fascination, which the desire to overleap our mortal boundaries produces even in the best regu-

lated minds. In these dark regions lying on the outskirts of probability, he ranged freely; revelling in dreams and imaginings, he was soaring in the heights, which the feeble voice of the common sense is unable to reach; seated in a tiny bark of *Mongolfier*, he looked down with contempt upon the crouching mankind. Sober reason was at the moment utterly overset. Having exhausted his intellectual powers, he began to confound his waking dreams, hallucinations, and creations of his bewildered imagination, with realities. At last his imagination was wrought to a state of excitement, in which his own shapings, the wildest and transitory coinage of his own fancy, became vivid as realities. Some more days of solitude would have made him outlive his senses and share the fate of *Cowper;* but for a friend who rescued him from this fatal doom, and whose society had a tranquillizing and composing effect on his mind. Ejected from the paradise of his own creation, as well as from the gloomy regions which lie beyond the limits of human understanding, he was now bereaved of every feeling that used to fill up his heart, and found himself on a sudden without any thought to occupy his mind; a complete vacancy followed the crowded and stirring scenes. After a storm that had almost stunned his faculties and roused its soul to its very bottom, a sudden silence filled him with awe; it was like the parting of his soul from the body going on in his presence, something like death at which we are gazing; something that might have rambled through the soul of the *Emperor Charles V.*, when looking on his own funeral. It is impossible to live long in such a vacuity of mind. Having experienced great kindness and unwearied

care at the hand of his friend, who tenderly studied his happiness, his wounded heart began to open to milder feelings of friendship; but this roused his imagination, which soon tincturing out with lively colours a picture of unattainable friendship, something that in reality never had existence; with such high standard of friendship measuring his friend, he soon detected a flaw in his character; he not only was alive to his real failings, but saw in his imagination the whole train of those that generally accompany them; dwarfs magnifying into giants. This cooled his friendship. He soon forgot the obligations he exowed him, and only the innate righteousness of his cellent heart prevented him from turning to an enemy a person at whose hands he received so much disinterested kindnesses. He has now exhausted the whole list of strong feelings apt to engross the whole mind of a man: love, enthusiasm for knowledge, and friendship. He was utterly unfitted to following the steep road of ambition or sordid avarice. He is seemingly disenchanted and wrapt in indifference, bears the appearance of yielding the mastery to common sense; but in fact his mind is a volcano covered with snow: he is always unable of forming a correct idea of the world, passes judgment on men according to his own imaginary standard of perfection; condemns as a fool every person, only that he is not, in his opinion, a genius. He always does every thing either too soon or too late; in him the dreaming and imaginative faculties bore over the sterner faculty of reason; his winged intellect, buoyant and proudly feathered, lifted him from the nest before nature was ready for the flight. Notwithstanding the goodness of his heart, the great powers of his intellect, the fer-

tility of his imagination, and the restless activity of his mind, he was unable to carry out a single one of his thousand schemes, has not fulfilled the expectations of his friends, made as yet no progress in the knowledge of men: he is ever prone to be quick-sighted in discovering the defects, flaws, and failings of others, never being aware of his own, looking at his fellow-creatures with a stern upbraiding countenance, though he is like an apple of the dead-sea, of showy appearance, but empty inside ; his talents only preyed on himself, and instead of a vigorous actor of the world, he became now a solitary dreamer, exhibiting all the deficiencies and bias of a *miscarried genius*.

The most ancient *confession* on record, giving an account of *the mind in pursuit of truth*, is that of ALGAZEL, an adversary to *Averroës*, both of them Arabian philosophers, deeply engrossed by the checkered speculations of Greek philosophers, especially of those of the Alexandrian school. *Algazel* began, like *Descartes*, with universal scepticism; but the latter considered certain intellectual notions as the source of all truth, whose credibility is founded on the clear, indisputable evidence of consciousness, on the revelation from within; whereas *Algazel* strived to escape scepticism, by taking refuge in the higher region of faith, founded on revelation from above; he sought the solution of his doubts in some higher faculty than reason: that is, in the intellectual intuition, in the transitory faculty of Plotinus, called *ecstasy* or a prophetism.

The human intellect goes through four stages in its development: the first stage is that of simple *sensation ;* about the age of seven begins the second, when the *understanding* is developing itself. The third is the time of the appearance of *reason*, when man perceives the necessary, the possible, the absolute,

and all those higher objects, of which we had no notion in the former stages. The fourth stage of intellectual development is the transitory faculty called *prophetism*. "After this," says Algazel, "comes a new period, when another eye is opened, by which man perceives things hidden from others; perceives all that will be, perceives things which escape the perception of reason; as the objects of reason escape the understanding, and as the objects of understanding escape the sensitive faculty."

Algazel gives the following very interesting history of his mind.

"I said to myself, my aim is simply to know the truth of things; consequently it is indispensable for me to ascertain what is knowledge. Now, it was evident to me, that certain knowledge must be that which explains the object to be known, in such a manner that no doubt can remain, so that in future, all error and conjecture respecting it must be impossible. Not only would the understanding then need no efforts to be convinced of certitude; but security against error is in such close connexions with knowledge, that even were an apparent proof of its falsehood brought forward, it would nevertheless cause no doubt, no suspicion of error being possible. Thus, when I have acknowledged ten to be more than three, if any one were to say, 'On the contrary, three is more than ten, and to prove the truth of my assertion, I will change this rod into a serpent;' and if he were to change it, my conviction of his error would remain unshaken. His manœuvre would only produce in me admiration of his ability; I should not doubt my own *knowledge*.

"Then was I convinced, that all knowledge which I did not possess in this manner, and respecting which

I had not this certainty, could inspire me with neither confidence nor assurance; and all knowledge without assurance is not knowledge.

"Having examined my knowledge, I found myself divested of all that could be said to have these qualities, unless perceptions of the senses and irrefragable principles were to be considered such. I then said to myself: now having fallen into this despair, the only hope remaining of acquiring incontestable convictions is by the perception of the senses and by necessary truths. Their evidence seemed to me indubitable. I began, however, to examine the objects of sensation and speculation, to see if they could possibly admit of doubts. Then doubts crowded upon me in such numbers that my incertitude became complete. Whence results the confidence I have in sensible things? The strongest of all our senses is sight; and yet looking at a shadow, and perceiving it to be fixed and immoveable, we judge it to be deprived of movement; nevertheless, experience teaches us that, when we return to the same place an hour after, the shadow is displaced: for it does not vanish suddenly, but gradually, little by little, so as to be never at rest. If we look at the stars, they seem as small as money-pieces; but mathematical proofs convince us that they are larger than the earth. These and other things are judged by the senses, but rejected as false by reason. I abandoned the senses, therefore; having seen all my confidence in their truth shaken.

"Perhaps, said I, there is no assurance but in the notions of reason—that is to say, first principles. Such as, ten is more than three; the same thing cannot have been created and yet have existed from all eternity; to exist and not to exist at the same time is impossible.

"The senses replied: what assurance have you that your confidence in the first principles is not of the same nature as your confidence in us? When you relied on us, reason stepped in and gave us the lie; had not reason been there, you would have continued to rely upon us. Well; may there not exist some other judge superior to reason, who, if he appeared, would refute the judgments of reason in the same way that reason refuted us? The non-appearance of this judge does not prove his non-existence.

"I strove in vain to answer the objections. And my difficulties increased when I came to reflect upon sleep. I said to myself: during sleep you give to visions a reality and consistence, and you have no suspicion of their untruth. On awakening, you are made aware that they were nothing but visions. What assurance have you that all you feel and know when awake does actually exist? It is all true as respects your condition at that moment; but it is, nevertheless, possible that another condition should present itself, which should be to your awakened state that which your awakened state now is to your sleep; so that, in respect to this higher condition, your waking is but sleep.

"If there is such superior condition, in which our waking state will be regarded as sleep, can we ever attain to any participation in it?" He is suspecting that the ecstasy described by *Soufis* must be that condition.

"I was thus forced to return to the admission of the intellectual notions at the basis of all certitude. This, however, was not by systematic reasoning and accumulation of proofs, but by a flash of light which God sent into my soul. For whoever imagines that truth can only be rendered evident by

proofs, places narrow limits to the wide compassion of God."

Having escaped scepticism by taking refuge in the higher region of faith, reviewed the various sects of the faithful, beginning with the *Dogmatists*, he soon perceived that "their aim is the preservation of the faith from the alterations introduced by heretics." He then turned to the Philosophers; but finding all the philosophical schools incompetent to aid him, he turned to the writings of the Souphis, where he learned the great principle of Souphism—viz.: that the highest truths are not to be attained by *study*, but by *transport*—by a transformation of the soul during *ecstasy*.

"Then it became apparent to me that the Souphis were men of intuition and not of words. I saw that I had learned all that could be learned of Souphism by study; and that the rest could only be attained by abandoning myself to ecstasy, and living a pious life. The different branches of knowledge which I have cultivated, and the various methods I had pursued in religious and philosophical inquiries, had inspired me with a devout faith in God, in his prophet, and in the last day. These three fundamental dogmas were indelibly impressed upon my soul, not by means of any precise argument, but by circumstances and expe-riences impossible for me here to detail. I was convinced that we can only aspire to happiness in this world by subduing the soul and turning it aside from concupiscence; and that the most important of all things was to extirpate from it the attachment to this world; and humbly to direct our thoughts to our eternal home. Reflecting, then, upon my situation, I found myself bound to this world by a thousand ties:

temptations assailed me on all sides. I then examined my actions. The best were those relating to instruction and education; and even there I saw myself given up to unimportant sciences, all useless in another world. Reflecting on the aim of my teaching, I found it was not pure in the sight of the Lord. I saw that all my efforts were directed towards the acquisition of glory to myself."

As he was one day about to lecture to his auditors, his tongue refused utterance: he was dumb. Looking on this as a visitation of God, and deeply afflicted, he lost all appetite, his frame sank slowly. "Then feeling my helplessness, I had recourse to God, as one who has no other resource in his distress. He compassionated me, as he compassionates the unhappy who invoke him. My heart no longer made any resistance, but willingly renounced the glory and the pleasures of this world. Having distributed my wealth, I left Bagdad and retired into Syria, where I remained two years in a solitary struggle with my soul, combating my passions and exercising myself in the purification of my heart, and in preparation for the other world. I frequented the mosque of Damas, and there was wont to mount the tower, and remain there alone all day in prayer! I also visited Jerusalem, and made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Then the urgent request of my children, and some affairs of my own, made me return to my country, in spite of the resolution I had formed never to revisit it. Solitude had augmented my desire of living in retreat, there to complete the purification of my heart, and rightly dispose it for meditation.

"I did not despair of finally attaining the state of ecstasy. Every time that any accident turned me

from it, I endeavoured quickly to re-enter it. In this condition, I remained ten years. In my solitude there were revelations made to me which it is impossible for me to describe, or even to indicate. Enough if, for the reader's profit, I declare that the conviction was forced upon me, that the Souphis indubitably walked in the true paths of salvation."

Algazel, vexed by the mysterious problems of existence from his earliest youth, reviewed the four sects of the faithful; but finally resolved to throw off all authority, to free himself from all the opinions which had been instilled into him during the unsuspecting years of youth, and, like *Descartes*, began with universal doubt; but after having wasted the best years of his life in earnest study to no purpose, after having endeavoured to find the solution of his doubts in the intellectual intuition or *ecstasy* of the Souphis, he got into a maze without an issue.

Descartes was born towards the end of the sixteenth century, when the vast system of scholastic philosophy began tottering. On account of his delicate health, he was exempted from the scholastical method of elementary education, improving his mind by reading. Early in his life he had occasion of discovering that there are prevalent, running among men quite contrary opinions, even upon things of the utmost weight and interest for mankind. He has confessed that all the learning he got hold of in the Jesuitical Academy of Laflèche, only made him sensible of his ignorance.

It is but rarely that doubts are taking root in a youthful mind filled with rich promises of hope. Having had as yet no time for exploring all the ranges of thought, the youth is not very disposed to suppose, that the greater part of our knowledge consists in our

aptitude to be ignorant. NESCIRE QUODAM MAGNA PARS EST SCIENTIÆ, says *Cicero*. *Descartes'* mind, which was not crammed by ready-made learning, took early the habit of depending upon its own exertions in the acquirement of knowledge; he found it convenient, whatever he was learning, to attend to two circumstances, viz. *certainty* and *universality*. The science of mathematics strengthened him (if it did not generate it) in this propensity of his intellect. Being at leisure, and allowed to dispose of his time according to his inclination, he took to reading the writings of metaphysicians and moralists; but he found it impossible for him to acquiesce in the first principles, which they laid down as the foundation of their doctrines.

Logics taught him how to make legitimate inferences, and put his acquired notions into systematical order—but was not able to teach him to make new discoveries; even the scholastical mood of argumentation and arguing, *the dialectics*—only roused new doubts in his tottering mind. Though upon leaving Laflèche, he knew little more than mathematics—he resolved to search mathematical certainty in all other branches of the human knowledge. Laying no confidence in books, he began to learn by himself from the first elements: he determined to ascertain, with the aid of his own powers, the whole creation as well as the phenomena of his mind—to meditate upon them and tame down the anxieties roused in his mind by doubts—and to make himself sure of the truth of this acquired knowledge solely by the means of his own powers. Meanwhile, he was sent to Paris in order to acquire good manners, where, in the bustle of pleasure and flighty society, he was about to forget his innate love of learning, his anxious desire of ascertaining

truths and acquiring knowledge, and sank down into a disorderly and reckless life. But having by chance fallen in with some men of learning, he felt his former love of literary pursuits revive. In order to evade the importunities of his friends exclusively given to pleasure, he took lodgings in the remotest part of the town, where he spent two years in learning mathematics; but at last found out by his friends, he enlisted in the Dutch army, which was then fighting the Spaniards, and there, among the horrors of war and clashing of swords, he continued his mathematical studies. Having laid down his commission in the Dutch army, he again engaged in the Bavarian, and lived at *Neuberg;* here taking advantage of the solitude and leisure which he was permitted to enjoy, he began to weigh on the scale of reason the striking discrepancies in the opinions of men, and came to the conviction that it was of absolute necessity to revise and remodel the whole stock of human knowledge. To effect this, he tried to forget and obliterate all opinions, systems, and theories implanted in his mind, to which he gave the name of *methodical doubting*,— and determined to raise up from the first foundations the whole system of human knowledge. But he kept in the greatest secrecy this scheme of his, for fear of being scoffed at and accused of presumption for scorning and making light of the learning of so many eminent philosophers. Engrossed with this idea, he was balancing amidst hope and fear, if his scheme of remodelling and reorganizing all the sciences might prove to be a failure. But to throw off old prejudices and his own opinions, which might prove to be prejudices also; to revise and re-examine all your acquired knowledge, is a very painful and hardly executable

thing. If he would have, at the outset, substituted his new discovered truths in place of those suspected as false, he might have prosecuted his projected scheme with more success; but having to build up quite a new system of human knowledge, his mind startled at the thought with awe. Amidst emotions of inflamed fancy, he imagined to have a revelation, and, beguiled by the delusions of his diseased brain, he was persuaded that, with the means of a revelation from heaven, he has traced out the main road to truth. But as this pretended revelation, like other delusions of a diseased mind, was hidden under ambiguous symbols, he turned a devotee, took to prayers, and made a vow to make a pilgrimage to Loretto, that his mind might be allowed to see clearly into the meaning of this revelation.

The following spring he proceeded with the Bavarian army towards Ulm and Bohemia; he was present at the battle of Prague, which decided the fatal doom of the Bohemian nation, and which no sensible man, when not engrossed by a delusion, could gaze upon with the indifference of Descartes.

The next winter he resumed his meditations, and though, as might easily be imagined, he never liked the bustle of a military life, he engaged in the Austrian army again, only to have an occasion of seeing the world. However, he soon left military life for ever, and made a tour through Europe. By associating and conversing with unschooled people, he hoped to find out some truths common to all mankind, which, by their universality, might serve as first principles or the foundation of the whole amount of the human knowledge, and which could release him from his painful doubts; but he confessed

that there prevails among the unschooled and untutored people the same diversity of sentiments and opinions as in the writings of philosophers; however, he has found what he did not look for nor expected: he learned to know a great diversity of prejudices which, set off by different manners, make a more vivid impression on our mind; he saw several natural phenomena, and, among great many errors, he stumbled upon many lucid and irrefragable truths. He retired afterwards to Holland, and there availing himself of the liberty of the press, published his two books : " Method" and " Meditations."

Our mind is constantly engaged in judging of righteousness, justice, expediency, and utility. Every man is engaged the whole of his life in the pursuit of truth. But as the human intellect is never free from the influence of passions, language, and society, on framing some rules for an inquiring mind, we must necessarily reflect on the ties and relations in which a thinking man is always to be found,—there are then certain rules originated in those relations which must not be overlooked by a man engaged in the search of truth. These rules constitute a kind of the *morality of logic.* Descartes, setting about to ascertain every thing by his own exertions, deemed it necessary to frame for himself such a kind of rules.

" When a man," says *Descartes*, " is about to build a new house for his accommodation, in the place of an old one, he not only thinks of pulling down the old house,—of bringing together stones, bricks, and lime, not only is sketching the plan of the new building to be raised—but he looks for a house where he might abide till the new one is ready. So not to be in the dark, how I must behave the time of my doubting of

things, which I propose to put to a new test and examination, and that I might till then lead a happy life, I found it necessary to frame for myself temporary *ethics*, composed of three or four rules.

First. As it is a long time ago that I was assailed by doubts concerning the opinions which I have blindly acquiesced and adopted, I am determined to keep the laws and manners of my country, and to preserve the religion in which, thank God, I have been born and brought up; in other circumstances I will follow the opinion of the most moderate and sober, and avail myself of principles which regulate the life and are accepted by every sensible man; for, having begun to suspect the opinions I had formerly adopted, and to examine their foundations, I thought it would be most prudent of me to follow for the time the example of enlightened men; and though it may happen that there may be found in Persia or in China as many enlightened men as with us, notwithstanding I thought it prudent to be governed by the opinions of men in whose society I am to live. Moreover, in order to ascertain what they prefer and approve, I determined to look more to their actions than words, not only because I thought that men rarely say just what they feel, but more so because many are quite unable of giving any account of their actions; because to distinguish the good from the bad and to acquiesce in it, is the result of two very different exertions of intellect, and we often find in men the one without the other. Of all opinions generally received I always gave my preference to that which is more moderate, because it proves to be easier in practice, and in the most cases the best. I consider every extremity to be an error, because if, on follow-

ing the middle way, I happen to blunder, it would always be a consolation to me, that I will find myself gone astray not so much from the right way on following that middle way, as when running to extremes. Placing myself in the middle, I resolved, however, for myself, the right of changing my opinion: not that I would be inclined to condemn the laws, which bind every one down to his promise, and oblige him to fulfil his engagements, but as I never saw any thing in the world unchangeable, I could not preclude myself the liberty of changing, especially as I cherished the hope that my opinions will always improve, not get deteriorated. It appears to me very unreasonable to abide by the old and worse opinion, only because I happened formerly to acquiesce in it, and to consider it my duty to act according to an opinion, which ceased to be true, or which I could approve no more, only because I happened to have approved it formerly.

Secondly. I determined to prosecute my goal with perseverance, without hesitating and procrastination; those I have set my mind to for certain reasons, as well as those that I undertook for doubtful or no reasons at all, imitating the prudence of a man astrayed in a thick forest, when the best trace of a footpath had disappeared, who never goes to and fro, but proceeds all the time in one direction, which he took to for a very slight, perhaps for no motive at all, and then never leaves it; for thus, though he may not reach the place he wished to come at, he is nevertheless sure of extricating himself out of the mazes in which he was wandering. And as it is impossible to postpone everything in our life, therefore, being at a loss to know immediately what would be the best, I determined to prosecute my way to the goal which

appears to be the best. Having no stronger motive for one thing rather than another, we must make nevertheless a choice and abide by it, not considering it as doubtful as far as the immediate practice is at issue, but as sure and certain; because the motive why we have preferred one thing among many others is indubitable. This rule of conduct has spared me a great many anxieties and painful wavering, that is commonly the plague of weak minds, who are prone to abandon a thing which they considered at first as beyond any doubt.

Third rule.—I laid it down as a rule never to be transgressed, to vanquish myself rather than to struggle with my destiny, to change my own will rather than the established order of the world. I endeavoured to impress upon my mind the conviction that we have solely unbounded mastery over our thoughts, so that, if, after the greatest exertions we are unable of attaining our wishes, we must lay it down among impossibilities. It was in my opinion sufficient to check and avert my desires from things unattainable, and thus to forward my happiness. For our will naturally aspires to things acknowledged by our reason as possible to attain. If we are schooled to consider the external world as laying equally out of our power, the blighted hopes and frustrated wishes and claims will as little affect us as that we are not sovereigns of China or Mexico. So bending our will to necessity, we will not be sorry that our body is not so indestructible as the diamond, that we have got no wings as birds; we will suffer the pains of a disease with more patience, and when shut up in a prison, we will not sigh for liberty. I don't deny that to look at all things in such a light it requires a long practice and reiterated meditations. And this is in

my opinion, the source of that boasted equanimity of those philosophers, who, amidst the greatest sufferings of the body, under the pressure of poverty, professed themselves to be happy. For having constantly present in mind that nature has put certain limits to our powers, they were so strongly persuaded that every thing, except their thoughts, is out of their power, that they wished for nothing more, and by dint of meditation upon that truth, they were so schooled to keep down their will, that they were well entitled to consider themselves as the wealthiest, the most powerful and happy. For man, not strengthened by such convictions, will never meet with such a happy destiny as to have all his longings and wishes accomplished. At last I have determined to try for some time every line of life, and to select for me the best one. I have no mind to expatiate upon all pursuits of men; as for me, I found nothing that would suit me better than to persevere in my original purpose,—viz., to devote my life to the inquiry of truth, according to my own method. I gathered from it such happy results, that in my opinion, there is nothing in the world more innocent and more delightful. When by means of this method I happened to discover any thing that was not commonly known, and that I judged to be of some weight, I cannot express the pleasure I felt. Besides, these three rules would not have satisfied me, had I not determined to continue perseveringly my inquiries according to that method. For as God has endowed every man with some powers for distinguishing good from bad, I was of opinion that it was not right, even for a moment, to be governed by the opinions of others, if I had not the determination to examine with my powers every opinion, as soon as I shall be sufficiently pre-

pared to such a task. And I could never be directed in my life by the opinions of others, had I not reason to hope that I will discover something better, if such a one exist. Lastly, I could not have mastered my passions and be satisfied with things that are within my power, if, continuing my way, I did not hope to ascertain things within the reach of my mind and attain at things I am allowed to wish for. Besides, as our will is always inclining to or recoiling from what our reason reckons to be right or wrong; for, doing right, it will suffice to judge right; and conversely if we find motive enough for acting right, we shall judge as right as possible; and in that manner we may further to the utmost our happiness. The hope of attaining virtue and felicity, will keep our wishes in proper restraint.

Descartes having traced out such a clear, straight, and new road, finished however with delusions to which his mind had a natural bend; besides the fanciful theory of whirl pools thrown long ago into the lumber of exploded doctrines, he did not achieve any great thing in philosophy; he was but a *miscarried genius*.

CHAPTER XII.

GENIUS.

A man of genius—Universal and precocious genius—Genius with philosophical temperament—The German Metaphysician, IMMANUEL KANT—*Genius with poetical temperament—An extempore Poet, or Improvisator—Practical genius*—NAPOLEON BONAPARTE—LORD WELLINGTON—*Musical genius.*

GENIUS, which the Greeks have painted as a winged child, with a flame above its head, is distinguished from other capacities by uncommon powers of invention, construction, and plasticity, and is endowed and adorned with every species of *intellectual excellence.* We look with astonishment and delight at this rare combination of sublimity and depth, grace and lightness, the highest aptitude for abstract speculation, with the most exquisite delicacy of taste and sensibility of feeling; profound melancholy with the most happy humour, subtilty and originality of intellect, surrounded by all the ministering aid of luxurious imagination, a far-seeing eye, ready wit and eloquence, with an inquiring turn of mind and astonishing powers of acquisition. It is endowed with great rapidity of association, a memory equally rapid in appropriating as tenacious in retaining and willing to pour out its hoarded treasures a sprightly; fancy, fertile and opulent imagination, patient power of observation,

capacity of prolonged and concentrated meditation, liveliness of intellect, acute judgment, inexhaustible fecundity of invention, a strong constructive power of mind, which enables it to demolish an obsolete system, and to raise a durable fabric in its place, a logical understanding, searching new roads of thought, framing new orders of ideas, and building a new system upon a new basis; marvellous quickness in discovering unthought of resemblances, analogies, and differences, which qualify it for making discoveries in sciences and arts. These excellencies, blended in the mind without struggle for mastery, but harmoniously proportioned, each colossal and symmetrical, are often tinctured by eccentricity and enthusiasm.

Genius, then, is not a faculty of the mind, but its highest perfection, personal attribute, and natural gift of heaven. A careful education, a good training, may, under favourable circumstances, hasten the development of genius, may excite to the early displaying of its powers and teach it to wing its way against the storm, awake confidence in its own powers; but even the most skilful training is unavailing to turn a man of ordinary capacity into a genius. A proper improvement of mind, a good education, may form sober-minded and enlightened men; but genius bursts forth by itself, unexpected, unlooked for, without notice. Circumstances may contribute greatly to the furthering or checking the development of genius, but can never create one. There is no country in Europe as magnificent, as rich in poetical associations, as Switzerland in the late summer-season; however, the Swiss have no *Milton* or *Claude-Lorraine* to boast of. But on the other hand, with its inborn impulse, which early manifests itself with irresistible power, native

genius, with its creative warmth, can never be smothered in the human soul: it will pierce through ice, spread its long and versicoloured wings under the scorching sun of Italy or the dense London mist; it will work itself out beneath the encumbrance of the most uncultivated mind, even amidst the perplexed feelings and the tumultuous thoughts of the most visionary enthusiast, who is often a man of genius, but misplaced.

A man of genius works from inspiration, is a rapid thinker, always in advance of his age; he utters for multitudes what they vainly wished to say; he begins where rules end; his broad and masculine understanding is capable of grasping the very result to which others win their way by the more cautious processes of logical investigations; he seems to disdain to move in a vulgar orbit; being always capable of perceiving some analogy, even among things very distant, he ascertains easier great analogies than little differences; impatient to get at the solution, he likes to skip over the links which connect premises with their inferences; however, no affinity among the ideas, no connexion of truth escapes his eagle glance, but does not arrest or keep off his flight. Everything takes its colour from the hue of his mind. He owns the talent of eliciting general truths or general laws of nature from the most unpromising facts, and of throwing a new light upon subjects but little connected with one another. So *Newton*, from an apple dropping from the tree deduced a general law extending itself to the whole universe.

The wonderful and rare combination of most various mental endowments generally are connected in a man of genius with simplicity of mind, most tender and

feeling heart; and this is one of the finest displays of the influence of great intellectual capacity upon our moral character and even manners.

A man of genius, endowed with a comprehensive mind, has his peculiar way of viewing the external world. Everything makes a strong and lasting impression on his mind; every generous thought is capable of putting him into a trance. A single word, when once taken hold of, is in a twinkling metamorphosed in his mind into a vivid thought, and, rousing strong feeling in his heart, goes to the very bottom of his soul, pervades with the swiftness of lightning all the inmost recesses of his mind, brings forth an infinity of associations, puts in motion all his faculties, and, like a stick thrust into an ant-hill, rouses a flow of spirits and a strange tumult in his soul, which is like a swelled sea flowing into boiling furrows of foam.

Never a slave to current and dominating opinions, he does not like to proceed on a trodden path, and prefers an abyss to a rut; is fond of struggling and matching with the greatest difficulties; his thoughts, overskipping the limited horizon of common sense, have always an appearance of boldness on their face, and are generating doubts and mistrust. Outstretching the immense wings of his intellect, a man of genius is soaring in the ranges of infinite firmament, and is thus enabled to overlook new regions of thought. Of all that has taken hold of his mind by dint of observation and experiment, he elicits general and wide-spreading principles, casting new light upon the whole stock of the human knowledge, and giving a clearer insight into the workings of nature. Keenly alive to the beauties of the outward world, things re-

flected in the mirror of his mind get new colours and compass, and are apt of entrancing us in admiration.

The beauty of his works, springing from exactness of proportion, does not always strike at first sight, but rises upon us as we bestow time in considering it, as we experience on looking upon Apollon of Belvedere or St. Peter. We admire in them profound speculation, brilliant theories, wonderful portraying, or, which is harder to be attained, artistic beauty. In reading his performances, we enjoy something of the same pleasure as when looking on some antique vase, noticing and delighted only by the beautiful form in which it is moulded, and the exquisite taste which has presided over the workmanship. A man of an average capacity may be able of supplying the mere materials of a drama, a poem, or a theory; but the conception and the arrangement of the whole, the originality, eloquence, the diversified beauties of style and colouring, which enhance the effect of this creation, the strength and facility with which we see it shaped and animated, the very difficult form in which it is thrown, the uniting of seeming incompatibles, is the work and creation of genius. His imagination often supplies his logic with materials, and without being a poet, he sometimes calls poetry to his aid, but only to set forth those ideas, which logic cannot grasp and which are beyond demonstration. He has sometimes the sudden and imperious suggestions of some premonitions or presentiments, a kind of inspiration, which opens to his mind new families of pregnant thoughts and a new field of inquiry.

He is creating thoughts and ideas as well as form and method, language, turn of expression and diction, never lets the forms of speech distort or modify his

thoughts and mould the sense, permitting them to flow their natural bent. With him the words are not precisely the instruments of thought, but he uses them only as beacons and landmarks, only to mark and designate his road. He has a hand endowed with plastic powers in the moulding and forming of sentences and phrases. His great conceptions are bodied forth in a happy originality of expression; seizing the language in its rude state, he compels it, in spite of its intractability and hardness, to become a malleable material, a wieldy and delicate instrument of thought, and puts forth its full capacities, and fuses its heterogeneous elements into forms of beauty, which cannot become obsolete. It is not the labour of grammarians that contributes the most to the development of the innate capabilities of a language, it prospers only under the handling of genius, that are capable of fixing it and giving rules to those who may write after; thus *Dante*, *Petrarca*, and *Boccaccio* out of a Tuscan dialect, but partially reclaimed from barbarism, have made the beautiful language of the whole of Italy.

Genius has the power to invest itself with the feeling of others, and occasionally to impart not only more correct, but more forcible expression to those feelings, than could have been given them by the parties themselves. The celebrated engineer *Robins*, who gave a very animated and interesting description of *Anson's* voyage, which sent more youngsters to sea than *Robinson Crusoe*, furnishes one of the most remarkable instances on record of that singular power of genius.

It often happens that a man of ordinary capacity has a gleaming of a pregnant thought, which how-

ever strikes the eye of his mind but faintly and goes down for ever. Only a man of genius is capable of discerning an unmeaning thought, brought to mind by the unremitting flow of association, from an idea, which may be a germ of a great invention, may lead from the view of a falling apple to the idea of a general law of the world; it is only a man of genius that is capable of fanning that evanescent spark into a great flame, and following out with rapidity the first germinant thought to its distant consequences. Men of ordinary capacity are often disregarding thoughts that come unexpectedly or as from inspiration, and are aware of its value only when it was developed, explained by a man of genius, and then they are apt of boasting that they have had just the same idea long before; it is just with ideas as with children, which are not taken notice of till the child has become a great man. The biography of a conception, of an idea, is just as interesting as the biography of men that have astonished or enlightened mankind. The unexpected appearance of a thought in our mind—the inspiration—is a sudden blaze of truth accompanied by a momentary feeling, which comes and goes by itself, never at our bidding, being out of our control; it makes its appearance suddenly, breaks in by a small chink and disappears as fast as lightning; if the mind is enabled to take hold of that precious but evanescent spark—if it can store it before the genial moment of inspiration is not over—if it is capable of cherishing and hatching it in its bosom for a certain time, there will come the happy moment when a long string of vivid ideas will rush out in a continual flow, as a thread unravelled out of a clue. An example of a suddenly overflowing thought was

remarked in the French orator *Mirabeau:* goaded by his opponents, he rose, giving, at the outset, utterance to some confused sentences, which came forth in loose words; but on a sudden a light broke in upon him; then a moment disclosed him more than would the most protracted contemplation; he was seen to develop some unexpected truths, of which all may have had a glimpse, but could never hit at or grasp them, but which now rushed directly from the very bottom of his soul with the violence of a mountain stream, embodied in few words and taking its hue from his excited mind. Incensed with a renewed opposition, he condensed more light upon his arguments, endeavoured to enforce conviction, and at last was seen to bend every mind to his opinion and filling the hearers with ecstasy.

Not only sober-minded men, even very clever men, but destitute of those higher gifts of intellect, never fall into mistakes or commit the errors of a man of genius; for they are never able to keep pace with him. Ingenuity is a quality of the understanding; genius is mostly distinguished by the power of invention. A man of great wit may enlighten our mind; a man of genius exalts it, fills with rapture and makes the reader boil over with thought. A man of great wit may endow his creations with a correct form, due harmony, and beautiful colouring; genius is visible in the vastness of his conception and boldness in the construction. In his vast and wonderful creations we trace great wealth hoarded in his memory; a glowing imagination, which, like the sun, gilds the most indifferent objects, and adds brilliancy to the brightest. A man of great wit may sketch out a very taking and faithful likeness, but genius imparts its

greatness to its creations, which have this exclusive privilege, that you may always discover something new to admire; for, whenever a man of genius presents to us a full-blown thought, you see several buds about ready to open; you discover some novel and unexpected excellency and beauty at every shifting mood of your mind. It is with genius, as with the creations of nature; a picture of *Tiziano*, a play of *Shakespeare*, a Swiss lake, the bay of Genoa or Naples, is an inexhaustible source of pleasure, varying with every hour of the day, with every mood of our mind, with the seasons of the year and the advance of our life.

Deeply engrossed with his own thoughts, flowing in unremitting association, a man of genius takes the greatest delight only in his internal world, does not like to occupy his attention with reading, and is often unable to understand the thoughts, statements, and arguments of others. The celebrated German metaphysician *Kant* acknowledged not to understand *Montesquieu*.

A biting wit going in research of the ridiculous, or the green eye of envious mediocrity, make on him a very unpleasant impression, not unlike that experienced by children, when playing joyfully upon a flowery meadow, they suddenly perceive the slimy circles of a serpent. Accustomed to live in the paradise of his own making, and to occupy his mental powers with deep thoughts or his imaginings, or engrossed with creations of his poetry, he stoops with reluctance to the duties and business of every-day life, and avoids anxiously every thing capable of cooling and freezing his enthusiasm, fading and wearing the freshness of his fancy, curtailing his ideas or stooping down and

bending his mind to realities grating on his high ideal. The youth of men of genius is rarely exhibiting proofs or signs of his future greatness; none is apt to foretel the mystical predispositions of genius, whose powers seem to lie dormant; nobody is aware what is going on in his young mind, which, with the modesty and shyness of a periwinkle, hides anxiously its excellences, opens its blossoms only in a shade, is unconscious of its own powers, invisible to those around, till the moment when just employed in breaking ground, it is developing its powers with rapid strides, giving wing to its imagination, takes its flight, when the innate spirit of free inquiry begins to show itself, when those ominous signs are bursting forth upon us unexpectedly, dazzling with its flashes and filling with astonishment mingled with regret those who had failed to discover its future greatness—hence it comes that the youth of great genius is always a blank in biography, though it is certainly the most interesting part of it. What do we know about the youth of *Shakespeare* or *Newton?*

Genius is an excellency, which is generally exciting more wonder and envy than love. It is not our object to sketch in full length, and eke out a long string of disappointments, griefs and baffled wishes to which men of genius are subjected, disappointments portrayed with a lively touch by *Goethe* in his *Tasso.*

Men of genius are generally of a melancholic turn; Aristotle instances *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Heraclitus*, as examples, and *Lysander* when approaching towards age. Their hyponchondriac habit is united with fits of low spirits, which make them shun society. They possess their powers of applications or fits of fancy irregularly, so as not to have at all times the same

faculty of exertion, and are unable to exert their talents with the same felicity. *Lord Chatham* was of such a temperament, so often found united to that great but perilous gift of nature. *Collins* and *Thomson* are well known to have suffered under such inequalities. *Milton's* immortal verse never flowed between the autumnal and vernal equinox; but mute in winter, his song was awakened by the genial temperature that made the groves vocal.

Genius is not, like talent, to be ruled, directed, or controlled. A man of genius, from the first dawn of his intellect, sets up for having his own way, likes to regulate his own conduct, and act upon his own views. He takes a delight only in those pursuits which are congenial with his intellectual cast, and usually shows the greatest contempt for all suggestions of caution and prudence. Men of high parts, before they hit upon the way on which their genius lies, are silent, melancholic, discontented, whimsical, stirring and shifting from one pursuit to another. Their buoyant spirit, continually in agitation, allows no repose to their mind; the depreciation of the lowest is to them more painful than the applause of the most high is pleasing; he is ever combatting with his situation, and makes ineffectual efforts to exist like those round him; his life is in eternal conflict with the monotonous and imitating habits of society. When obliged by depressing circumstances to engage in pursuits contrary to his strongest inclination, unsuited to his lofty feelings and soaring mind, he is miserable, but at last having hit on a pursuit falling in with his genius and taste, or discovered his true vocation, he crushes his iron chains resolutely, and like an overflowed Mississippi, opens to his genius a proper and vast field of action.

Men of great parts, forcing their way through thorns and difficulties, which obstruct their progress to their proper place in society, never fail to suffer from disappointments and failures, and feeling, as they do, more intensely their freezing chill, they are less able to bear adversity, as every one of their feelings is of a deeper hue and larger compass. What for an ordinary mind is but a disappointment, turns out to be a keen suffering or a great misfortune to them. Proud amidst tribulations, bearing up against the storm of fortune and adversity, they are modest and unassuming when in full tide of prosperity. They are offended with the overbearing pride of boisterous shallowness, but look with wonder, though without envy, at the more successful mediocrity. Relying only upon their superiority, not capable of yielding to circumstances, a delicate handling of man's foibles rating a flattery, they have the greatest difficulty of pushing themselves forward to make their fortune. Their works, which furthered the progress of civilization, their writings, which at once enlighten the mind and improve the heart, and are exalting our species, the exertions of their whole life which benefited mankind, are never or rarely fully and generally appreciated and valued, before the tomb has sheltered them from the eye of envy, and when there is nothing left but a grave to depose a laurel. There are but very few superior men, as *Lord Wellington*, *Goethe*, who enjoyed a full share of glory and rewards when yet living.

There are four principal types of *genius*, (besides the universal and precocious;) genius with *philosophical temperament*, having contemplative, speculative, and scientific bent of intellect; genius with *poetical temperament*, whose prevailing passion is ideal beauty;

practical genius, uniting some of the rarest endowments of the philosophical and poetical mind, with some peculiar qualities of intellect; and lastly, *musical genius*.

Men of *universal genius*, having a capacious and restless intellect and most versatile powers, do not seem to manifest any decided predilection for any one branch of science, but like to expatiate upon the whole surface of science; having powers requisite for its prosecution in any direction, they seem to have a mind adapted almost in equal measure to the successful pursuit of the diverse departments of metaphysics and criticism, philosophy, mathematical and physical sciences; equal aptitude for reading and thinking, for the accumulation of knowledge and for original speculation. They are apt of indulging in the immense gyration of thought, have great inclination to the accumulation of miscellaneous knowledge, easily bring their faculties to bear with promptitude on whatever for the moment happened to attract their attention, and freely indulge in digressions, though impatient to arrive at solution. *Paolo Sarpi*, the Venetian theologian, *Lord Bacon*, and *Tribonian*, embraced all the business and knowledge of their times. However, a man of *universal* genius can never turn a poet; all their attempts at poetry show their genius lays not that way; poetical turn of mind being ever exclusive and wholly dependant on a fertile and brilliant imagination, whose flight is impeded by the powers of the other faculties.

There were men of *precocious genius*, as, for instance, *Hugo Grotius*, *Kirke White*, and *Mozart*. *Philip Duke of Warton* evinced extraordinary political talents almost in boyhood, and died exhausted before reaching

middle life. It is a very interesting fact that inventive genius in mathematics is generally very precocious. All the great discoveries of *Isaac Newton* were made prior to his twenty-fourth year; in after life he seemed to have lost both the energy and ambition that had previously animated him in the pursuit of science. *Pascal* exhibited so early a propensity for geometry that his parents, for fear it might impede the cultivation of other sciences, purposely kept him in ignorance of that science, but his self-prompted genius discovered for itself at twelve years of age the elementary truths of the forbidden science. His father surprised him in the act of demonstrating on the pavement of the old hall, where he used to play, by means of a rude diagram, traced with a piece of coal, a proposition which corresponded to the thirty-second of the first book of Euclid.

Genius with a philosophical temperament.—Nature alone forms an intellect with exclusively speculative propensity, taking delight only in dialectical subtlety, abstruse investigation, and metaphysical niceties; such a bias of intellect—besides natural predisposition—is the compound result of training and habit. Speculative minds are only met with among nations and in ages when speculative philosophy was held in great repute; it is not of a spontaneous but of an artificial growth, as was the case in ancient Greece, among theologians of middle ages, and but recently in Germany.

Newton observed that depth in metaphysics is obtained by a great perseverance in scrutinizing. Every man is reasoning; the difference lies only in the depth and extensiveness: it is not given to every body upon seeing a river to think of its rise, its windings in

progress, and its mouth. By far the greatest part of mankind has no notion of such a process of mind as going up to the source of an idea, turning back to look into premises, descending to their ultimate consequences and possible inferences, and carrying forward logical deductions. Few men are reflecting upon their understanding, their intellectual faculties, their arguments, and the nature of the human mind; they are generally as utterly in the dark about everything connected with their faculties and the certainty of their knowledge, as how the food is assimilated, turned into blood, and how it is running up and down in arteries and veins. Only a long training and habit render us capable of such a feat of reflection, which seems not to depend solely on our natural propensity. It is easy to ponder or muse deeply in absence of mind; one has but to give fancy its free range, but to let loose the infinite chain of association, and only gaze on that moving world of images and thoughts, which, like a subverted ant-hill, present nothing but a tumultuous chaos and are running too fast for reflexion; but it is difficult to look at the inside of our mind, to reflect one's intellect on itself, to observe the working of the immediate intuition of the soul; for such a feat of mental dexterity one must turn up his mind's eye and look in the very face of the intellect, as we do looking at our own eyes in the mirror. To this, one must be trained by a long habit and the most perseverant exertion; because our intellect is very like our eye, which sees easily everything except itself. A man accustomed to pondering, examining, and investigating those great questions which, wrong or right, are handed over to our understanding for solution, initiated into all mysteries of

philosophy and metaphysics, inured to deep thinking, is laying too much confidence in the powers of the human understanding, seems to be quite in the dark about the existence of an order of sentiments higher than the calculation of the understanding and the deductions of logic, he exerts himself to solve all questions by reasoning, and cherishes the hope to arrive at the knowledge of truth by the aid of argumentation, forgetting that there are things which only our heart or faith may conceive and understand. He wants to get at convictions, at ideal beauty, even at faith itself, by mounting up the scale of syllogism, and is confounding the boundaries which divide knowledge from faith and feeling; for there are a great many things, more than we suppose, which we are unable to know, but which we feel and believe, and which can never be reasoned out of our conviction.

The painful exertion of dividing attention both on the object of our inquiry and the inquiring faculty, the continued spinning of subtle thoughts, engross to such a degree the mind, that, fatigued and wearied out as it is, his intellect becomes unfit for the practical use of every-day life, and, what is more, his absence of mind sometimes wears very striking appearances of mental alienation.

Of all the metaphysicans of modern ages, the most remarkable and profound was the German philosopher, *Immanuel Kant*, whose name is pretty well known in the literary world, but whose books, philosophy as well as style, are of the most difficult access, and rival for obscurity the writings of the Grecian philosopher, *Heraclitus*. It is impossible to meet with a metaphysician able to handle the most abstruse and subtle ideas—great many of his own making—with such in-

difference, ease, and dexterity; he reminds us of the glass-blower taking the glaring and liquefied glass in his bare hands and shaping it into different forms. Just so is the appearance of *Kant*. He plunges at once into the very middle of the metaphysical world, and, like a spider, is going up and down on his tiny web with the greatest agility and hardiness, sometimes suspended in the air, turned upside down, and baring the interior workings of his intellect, sometimes vanishing in dense clouds, then emerging from the invisible heights, seemingly never afraid of being hurled down—if one of those fine threads would break off—on the rocky bottom of a horrid and dark precipice which is lurking beneath. One cannot help shuddering at the idea, only to look at him our head becomes giddy. But *Kant*, inured by a long practice—he was during thirty years Professor of Metaphysics at Kœnigsberg—to such feats of metaphysical legerdemain, is speaking of the result of very intricate, subtile, and protracted arguments, with such easiness and such apparent carelessness, and links his thoughts together with such easy dexterity, as if he had to deal with things the most familiar and of every-day occurrence. But his metaphysics are enveloped in a veil of technical words, through which its real shape and aspect is scarcely discernible. His perplexed, uncouth, and obscure language, long parentheses, frequent inversions, the length, novelty, and harshness of many of the terms, which he has often and, on many occasions, unnecessarily invented, the length and the complication of his periods, have rendered his compositions all but illegible, except to those few who, armed with an iron perseverance, in spite of their repulsive form, are determined to study

them rather than to read, and are not deterred by a task equal only to travelling through Thibetian mountains. *Kant* embodies the result of a complicated mental labour not only in terms of his own making, but in old and current terms, and giving them quite a new signification, or in terms picked up from different languages, so much so, that even men versed in the chequered systems of Grecian philosophy and that of middle ages are hardly able of climbing in his company up those steeps of metaphysics, and understand rightly his meaning. For that reason, his first work, the most interesting of all published afterwards, lay for some time quite unnoticed, and that—when it was at last taken up—there was in Germany so wonderful a diversity in the exposition of his meaning. Besides, *Kant* not only invented new terms, but construed and framed for his use many metaphysical ideas, or adopted from those acute thinkers of middle ages, with certain, only to him known, limitations, qualifications or modifications. By means of these ideas, construed with great ingenuity and labour, mysteriously wrought, and, like a telescope, enabling us to see things most distant, he leads his readers on the very top of speculative philosophy, and shows to the astonished mind the whole of the metaphysical world, creating in him a sensation not unlike that we experience in our breast when looking down on Sicily from the crater of Etna.

It is not our intention to unravel the metaphysical clue he has been weaving with such pertinacity and perseverance till his fifty-seventh year of life ; for it was so late in life that he started for his philosophical career, began to acquire notoriety and fame, by publishing his book, "CRITICS UPON THE PURE REASON,"

which, like HUME'S *Treatise on Human Nature*, lay for a long time unnoticed and heavy on the hands of the publisher, but which at last made a great noise among German philosophers, gave a new life to metaphysical investigations, attracted general notice, and was so universally and highly valued in Germany, that the most remarkable among the literary celebrities of that country piqued themselves and made a pride of being able to understand it, or to explain and comment upon this new philosophy.

Kant was the first to subject to close examination all ancient systems of metaphysics, exhibiting a wonderful variety of shades; he was the first to notice and take up the bold question thrown out by *Hume;* he was the foremost in making an exact classification of the delusions and doubts of our intellect; he disclosed and pointed out antiquated blunders and mistakes given out and received as uncontrovertible truths, and he was one of those few privileged men who ventured to approach the utmost boundaries of the human understanding. His system of philosophy not only went beyond the ancient systems of *Aristotle* and those of dialecticians of the middle ages, as well as those modern, of *Locke*, *Leibnitz*, and *Wolf;* but his philosophical works had, up to the present time, a very striking and often untoward influence on the whole German literature, and even sciences, founded on observation and experiment. It seemed as if the human mind in Germany was doomed to turn back to exploded absurdities and idle subtleties of scholastical philosophy. His barbarous terminology became fashionable in the literary world, the more so, as it served to cloak and cover the barrenness of mind of the greedy mediocrity that wrote for life. The philo-

sophy of *Kant* had exercised the most preposterous influence even upon the light literature and poetry in Germany; except few poets of first-rate genius, as *Goethe* and *Schiller*, and few prose writers, as the Swiss historian, *John Muller*, every writer strained all his powers to render a dark conception yet darker and entangled, more like enigma or riddle, and was not satisfied till he got as difficult and almost as impossible to be understood as his prototype *Kant*.

But it cannot be denied that he opened to metaphysicians a new and vast field of inquiry; that he was the means of rousing the neglected study of the history of philosophy, which by his influence arrived in Germany to such a pitch of improvement that the English and French literature have nothing in that line of philosophical compositions to compare with. *Kant*, having given a perfect classification of all, though exceedingly various and chequered philosophical systems and notions, held up a beacon to German historians, as *Buhle*, *Tiedemann*, *Tennemann*, *Fülleborn*, and *Ritter*, and afforded a clue to guide them through the mazes and labyrinth of metaphysical speculations.

In order to set off *Kant's* intellectual character, we propose to present an outline, as clear as possible, of his great discovery in metaphysics, which he was used to compare with that of *Copernicus*, which inverting the old and prevalent opinion, showed that it was not the sun, but our globe that is revolving round the sun; for, considering that all philosophical systems, as founded on a moving sand, were easily inverted, that metaphysics only furnished an occasion to never-finishing disputes and arguing, that notwithstanding

the labour of several philosophers of high repute, there was as yet nothing firmly established in philosophy, he began to inquire into the reasons of such an everlasting fluctuation; but instead of looking into those very systems, as was done hitherto, he went to the source of all systems—that is, to the human understanding, which he put under his critical acumen, and so became the founder of what is called in Germany "Critical philosophy." This happy conceit placed him at once on the main road of philosophical inquiry, which had been opened to mathematicians by *Thales*, for logicians by *Aristotle*, for physical science by *Bacon*. But the first inducement to such disquisition was the *Treatise on the Human Nature*, by *Hume*, which he published only "for the entertainment of the learned and metaphysical world." *Hume* has proved that the idea of *causation*, that is, of necessary connexion between *cause* and *effect*, was not the result of experience, which only teaches us, that one thing follows upon another; but made a mistake, as *Kant* justly observes, asserting that the idea of causation is the result of our imagination, strengthened by habit. *Kant* has shown that *Hume* made such an inference, because he has perceived only a part of the great question at issue; whereas *Kant* has proved that: besides the idea of causation, the human understanding is making use of many others, having the same qualities—viz., necessity and universality, and do not proceed from experience; that metaphysics are founded only on ideas of such nature and extraction; and that those ideas are not the result of argumentation or reasoning, but constitute reason itself. Then he made out their number, and gave them the name of *transcendental ideas*. These

forms of reason, constituting its powers, do not have any reality, till they are connected with concrete ideas, generated by experience. By mere reasoning we may neither acquire nor enlarge our stock of knowledge, for the ideas, *à priori*, as, for example, God, immortality, the world, the free will, and our moral responsibility, are not the result of reasoning, but reason itself. Only by the means of those ideas, *à priori*, all our knowledge acquires unity, which we are able to comprehend. When sixty-four years old, *Kant* published a second edition of his *Critical Essay on the Human Reason.* It is a very remarkable circumstance that this great metaphysician began his career so late in life; he saw the necessity of sparing time in order to work out the whole of his system, and was obliged to leave to his numerous disciples the task of defending his tenets, throwing upon them a stronger light, clearing up many of his obscurities and preventing from misconception; a task which, straining themselves to the very verge of their abilities, they had performed with exemplary diligence if not success, by publishing numerous tracts, works, and even a dictionary of his particular language.

There is a curious contradiction pointed out in his critical philosophy: *Kant*, some say, had advanced that we are able to make out what in a given idea belongs to the object, what to the subject, and what to reason; whereas, somewhat later, he says, that we can ascertain objects only by means of certain ideas, inborn to reason, and with a certain modification introduced by them. Others have objected that about his system of philosophy there is lingering a latent idealism. It is not our province to dwell upon his system any longer, having only to do with the ap-

preciation of his speculative genius. However, without stopping to examine whether the long and painful exertion of meditation and labour of thought, necessary to the thorough understanding of his philosophy, proves only to be a healthful and invigorating exercise of our faculties, or is repaid by any direct and positive advantage, we may say, that, having gone over a long and subtile chain of arguments; obliged very often to turn back, when the perplexed path began to disappear entirely, as if obliterated by a drift of snow; often constrained to retrace our steps for fear of having swerved from the right way, after proceeding between prickling thorns and thistles, pitch-dark places with nothing to cheer us and guide, but the faint hope of reaching the goal, we are arrived at last at results, which disclose the nature of the human intellect, and show distinctly its boundaries; and it is our humble opinion, that *Kant* has explained the whole organization, powers, and bounds of our highest mental faculties, the whole—if we may say so —mechanism of the structure of human understanding; and that there is hardly any other discovery made in Europe from the time of the restoration of literature, which has disclosed to our mind's eye so great a mystery of nature. His system of moral philosophy, exposed with no less obscurity, is, however, very remarkable and fit to prepare our heart for the still higher truths of the gospel, disposing our soul to the acquiescence in convictions in presence of which all doubts disappear as the nightly mist before the golden rays of a rising sun.

Kant, endowed with original genius, has levelled with the ground all former philosophical systems, and covered the field of philosophical inquiry with ruins;

but he was capable of pointing out and appreciating the relative value of scattered materials. He had a native bent and propensity to prosecute the principles of every science to its primitive source and trace it out when in its first bud. He did not stop in his investigations till he had pierced through the words and language covering the thoughts, till he had ascertained all their chequered shapes, put aside the colouring which the subsequent ages had laid on it and obscured, and till he came at its very core. His subtile and protracted arguments *à priori ;* his subtile, evanescent, and vanishing ideas, like the gleam of lightning; and very often the whole chain of such ideas, which have escaped the attention of the most acute metaphysicians,—ideas grasped by a single mental effort, and noted down by a new term,—are the best evidence of his extraordinary capacity for the most abstruse metaphysical investigations. We often meet in his works with ideas taken from different sciences and arts, condensed into one single term; on the other hand, the most subtile difference could not escape his sharp-sighted attention.

At the close of his quiet and uniform life, in a remote country town, *Kant* was roused from his deep meditations by the great events of that memorable period. The future lot of humanity throughout the world hung trembling in the balance. Those were eventful days: the French revolution, the extinction of Venice, and the fall of Poland, two of the most ancient and glorious republics, which from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century shielded the Western Europe from the incursions of Tartars and Turks, and fought many a Marathonian battle; the startling appearance of *Napoleon Bonaparte ;* a new

physical science, that of Chemistry, raised by *Cavendish*, *Priestley* and *Lavoisier;* a new moral science, almost totally unknown to ancient Greeks, Political Economy, undergoing a great development and supplied with new foundations by *Adam Smith;* the inoculation of cow-pox introduced by *Jenner;* the galvanic phenomena newly ascertained; a new system of medicine started by *Brown*, did not fail of strongly attracting the attention of our metaphysician, though living in a solitary and retired place. He was of opinion that *Brown* had simplified the medical art; which, he said, perfectly agreed with the common turn of human exertions, for having run over the whole circle of perplexed and entangled hypotheses and surmises, the human understanding never fails to discover at last the simplest though very bright truth, which then appears to have been very obvious and near at hand. He then predicted a very great success to *Brown*, but he was not so sanguine concerning the utility of the cow-pox; he was afraid that by its inoculation men will be too much familiarized with animals, and that by the mingling of animal elements with our blood, or at least with our lymph, we may become subjected to the murrain.

He was still less happy in his political prognostications, having nothing in him of that statesman-like astrology by which the nativity of the future is cast. He looked with great interest on the rising star of *Bonaparte*, whose name was then resounding through Europe, and followed its course with an anxious eye. When the French fleet sent out by the *Directory* left Toulon, he declared that *Bonaparte* had no intention of landing in Egypt. He admired greatly his devices for hiding his real design. Our metaphysician was

sure that *Napoleon* was bent for Portugal in order to destroy there the exclusive influence and commerce of England, and deprive Englishmen of port wine; he did not desist arguing *à priori*, that the French would never touch Egypt, when all newspapers gave notice of their having taken land in Egypt and seized upon Alexandria. The whole expedition, according to his opinion, was ill-advised and untoward, and he very rightly predicted, that it will be brought to a prompt and very unfortunate issue.

But his predictions about the progress and probable discoveries in the field of physical sciences, now averred, show better the reach of his genius. "It appears," says *Kant*, "that magnetism, electricity, and caloric, are acting through one common medium; all are elicited by friction, and I suspect, that by a well-devised instrument, we might be enabled to show, that even in the phenomena of heat there is the same difference of poles, and the same positive and negative action. The inclined plane of *Galileo*, the pendulum of *Huyghens*, a tube filled with mercury of *Torricelli*, the pomp of *Otto Guericke*, and the prism of *Newton*, gave us the key to the disclosing of very great mysteries of nature, and it is very likely that there are some more mysteries hidden in the positive and negative action of matter, especially of electricity, and that a more felicitous posterity, in whose brilliant days I am penetrating with my vaticinations, will discover its general principles, which to us present themselves in an ambiguous shape." This remarkable prophecy has been verified in our century by the theory of galvanism, by the progress of chemistry, the exertions of *Schelling*, *Oken*, *Ampère*, *Oersted*, *Humboldt*, *Davy*, and many others. The year 1832,

when *Faraday*, *Davy's* disciple and friend, had contrived to elicit a spark from the reluctant magnet,* and the remarkable experiments with electricity of *Mr. Cross, of Taunton*, who, first of mortals, has been present at the nativity of a crystal and a spider-like insect of a distinct species, will be considered as a great moment in the history of physical sciences. So early as 1755, *Kant* says, in his *Theory of Heavens*, "There are great discoveries to be made; not only in the great Cosmos, but even in the comparatively little solar system, there lays a great deal as yet unknown to us; for we know only some too distant planets, the intermediate ones remain as yet to be discovered. Between Saturn, which is the most distant planet of our solar system, and the least eccentric comet, which nears us from a distance ten times, and perhaps more greater, may surely exist, a planet whose orbit

* "I have observed," writes *Mesmer* to his friend, from Vienna, "that the magnetic is almost the same thing as the electric fluids, and that it may be propagated in the same manner, by means of intermediate bodies." *Mr. Mackay*, in his valuable *History of Popular Delusions*, seems to put those words as a sample of *Mesmer's* absurdity, and appears not to be aware that the identity of those two fluids is one of the most brilliant discoveries of our age. *Mesmer*, groping in darkness, had a glimpse of a great secret of nature, but did not follow it out; for, unhappily for his fame, he turned a quack, having discovered a second secret of nature—namely, that "vulgus vult decipi," a secret perfectly known to all physicians. In fact, the whole chapter about the Magnetizers, seems to us a failure. A great secret of nature, lying on the mysterious bound, dividing the physical from the spiritual world, though far from being rightly ascertained and elucidated, should never be thrown too scornfully into the lumber of popular delusions. Shortly after the demise of *Copernicus*, there was given at Kœnigsberg before the reigning Prince of Prussia, a representation in which his solar system was ridiculed as an absurdity.

might be more like the orbit of that comet, than to that of Saturn." Twenty-five years later, *Herschel* made good this prophecy, by discovering, with his enormous and improved telescope, a planet lying behind Saturnus, and belonging to our solar system. Upon the same foundation, *Kant* advanced that, between Mars and Jove, there cannot exist an empty place in our system, and it was not long before *Piazza*, the Palermitan astronomer, discovered there the planet Ceres, and *Olbers, of Bremen*, the planet Pallas. These discoveries made a great impression upon his mind; however, speaking of them with delight, he never mentioned of having displayed a prophetic sagacity. But the best image of his philosophical genius is to be found in his vast system of Philosophy, compassing the whole stock of human knowledge, which like an oak raises its head into the clouds, and it is easier to indicate contradictions and slips than to raise from the ground a structure of such dimensions and compass. It is the result of immense thought expended on a vast subject, of strong convictions, of fifty years' profound and unwearied meditation, and of an intimate knowledge of Greek as well as scholastic systems of Philosophy.

Kant was endowed with a very comprehensive and great memory, and a very inquiring turn of mind, requisite for the disquisition of recondite and mysterious phenomena of the human mind. He was a very clever architect of his thoughts, and a perfect master in the art of reducing them into a system, but incapable of setting them forth in a lucid style; so much so that he made things, from their very nature arduous and obscure, still more obscure and all but impossible to be comprehended. He did not possess

a large library; he was of opinion that libraries have been the means of weakening the memory of the learned, who acquire the habit of relying solely on books. Having no extraordinary memory of a *Picus Mirandola*, *Scaliger*, *Angelo Poliziano*, or *Maliabecchi*, he recollected perfectly till the end of his protracted life everything he had read, especially what struck him in the account of travellers, his favourite reading. He often gave utterance to interesting observations and general truths which he deduced from obvious or daily occurrences; considering that scientific men are growing old, and hence unfit to literary pursuits, just at the time when they could have added mostly to the progress of sciences, he gave it as his opinion that Nature has not destined the human life for the cultivation of sciences. He displayed a lively wit in society, and in one of his tracts he even evinced a biting wit; and though in general not very partial to wit, when not connected with common sense, he yet overrated its power; "many a standard work," said he, "will reach posterity, if it is able to withstand the shafts of a scoffing wit." Sometimes his conversation proved exceedingly interesting. During an extraordinary dryness in the month of very scorching and oppressive heat, he was passing by a store-house, where he perceived the unfledged nestlings of swallows dashed to the ground and killed; this having roused his curiosity, he began to watch the swallows, and saw with astonishment that the poor creatures were throwing down their brood themselves; for observing a great scarcity of insects, they preferred of sacrificing a part of their brood in order to save the rest. "Looking on this instinctive forecast," says *Kant*, "I was wrapt up in admiration; my

intellect was obliged to stop: there was nothing to do, but to kneel down and humbly admire the wisdom of our Creator." The religious enthusiasm gleaming in his features, the tone of his voice, the folded hands, when uttering these words, baffle description, says his biographer, *Wasiansky*. Notwithstanding his constant and very deep meditations, he was generally of a cheerful mood, and very social. Besides, he was a man of spotless rectitude of mind, and of an unimpeachable virtue and integrity: he shrunk with disgust from the slightest falsehood, and during his protracted life never swerved from the path of virtue and the purest morality, which he was professing by words of mouth, or in his writings.

Genius with poetical temperament.—

> Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,
> Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought;
> Fancy, that from the bow that decks the sky,
> Brings colours, dipt in heaven, that never die;
> A soul exalted above earth, a mind
> Skilled in the characters that deck mankind;
> And as the sun, in rising beauty dressed,
> Looks to the westward from the dappled east,
> And marks, whatever clouds may interpose,
> Ere its race begins, its glorious close;
> An eye like his to catch the distant goal;
> Or, ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,
> Like his to shed illuminating rays
> On every scene and object it surveys;
> Thus graced, the man asserts the poet's name.
>
> COWPER.

We are entering into a fairy land, touching only shadows, and chasing the most changeable lights. Who is that person with wandering thoughts, absent mind, the breathing of whose soul is visible in every one of his features. The faint shadows you see

coming and going across his face, are dreams. His eyes sending forth sparkles of intelligence, beam with unerring indications of genius. He is always mounted high on the wings of ideal contemplation; even in conversation he displays a grasp of thought much beyond the ordinary pitch of clever men. He feels instinctively what others get at by a long searching; he exhibits an extraordinary exuberance and grace of fancy, and, by dint of his brilliant imagination, is lulling us delightfully in golden dreams. His marvellous reaches of thought, sounding and piercing all the depths of human nature, his divine mood of emotion, his dazzling trances of imagination, his profound intuition of characters, his poetical inspiration, keep our judgment in suspense. Though lost in thought, he is keenly alive to the beauty of the outward world, and has laid up a great stock of original observations upon man and nature, the breathing of which upon his poetical heart has early awakened the echo of his soul.

In him are blended together the greatest qualities of intellect seldom united in one mind; fertile and active imagination all compact, a vast intelligence and great powers of invention; but all appears to be kept in the golden chains of overbearing fancy, to which he is giving its free range. He is endowed with the power of gilding a distant prospect by the rays of imagination, has very intense feelings and deep thoughts, which he is never setting forth in the shape of strictly legitimate reasoning, that freezes the mind, but lets them flow unrestrained, intimately blended with feelings, and adorned with gorgeous flowers of imagination. His mind, reflecting the objects of the exterior world, tints them with the

glowing, changing rain-bow colouring of his own fancy, and what is the most difficult, high, and essential, what properly constitutes a poet, he transforms it in the shape of ideal beauty. But his poesy is only the dream of his sleeping passions, and he is unable to speak their language, but in their somnambulism.

Everything that has taken hold of his fancy in history, whatever his observation grasped at in the interior, as well as exterior world, whatever his eye can reach, or his fancy penetrate, is reflected in his mind thousandfold, as in a mirror broken to pieces, and gushes out from his mind in rich associations. Distant, dispersed thoughts are concentrating themselves in the focus of his mind: he is imparting his feelings to unanimated rocks, enhances the worth of common things, and those highly valued throws with scorn at your feet. Moving in a magical circle, he sheds illuminating rays on every scene and object, bewitches and enraptures the mind of his readers. His thought embodied in concise but felicitous terms, his words "exquisitely sought," his imaginings clothed in all the grandeur of impressive eloquence and splendid poetry, rouse every feeling of the soul by turns, and set us a thinking.

Soaring in the high ranges of thought, amidst associations rising up in golden mist, and spreading lustre over all, after a life-long abstraction of reverie, the bright visions of his imaginary world, in which he passes most of his life, leave a dazzle on his eyes, when he opens them on the prosaic realities, to which he stoops but very reluctantly, if not roused or rather led astray by ambition. As he never sees the world as it really is, but as reflected in his mind and meta-

morphosed by his imagination, as he constantly looks at Nature through the prism of his own fancy, he is liable, but too often, to mistakes and errors of judgment, his thoughts hurrying along too rapidly for reflection; hence it comes that a poetical genius is generally very unfit for practical life. His love as well as his hatred are unbounded and inconsiderate, and coming too late or too soon. Staring at commonplace people, he sometimes sees demons of malice and perverseness, or angels of beauty, loveliness, kindness, and virtue, or heroes of self-denying love. Then his recollections always bias his judgment. His mind, labouring under great variety of delusions, likes to brood sadly over this world, to indulge in the sad miseries of imagination, and to dwell on gloomy forebodings. He has never condescended to school his feelings, and is very sore at the denial of any imagined claim. The slightest injustice of fate, the slightest discomfiture of virtue, or a triumph of baseness, puts him out of temper. His mind is like eyes deprived of the eye-lids—too touchy, too sensible of every moral deviation. He is apt to take a sudden disgust for society, and seek a hiding place in a solitude, apparently for ever; but on a sudden, he feels a longing for the busy haunts of men, and desires to hear their sweet voices ringing praise in his ear; he then reappears in the world fraught with a new idea, and, tired with his lonely meditations, wishes to set up an active life; to remodel political society, he would fain cover the world with ruins, then he would like to build anew and accomplish in one day, what only the protracted labour of past ages and the happy coincidence of circumstances was enabled to achieve. Seeing at last the impossibility of realizing his dreams,

his feverish, ever-stormy, tempestuous, and constantly excited mind is again longing for respite, for a repose in some lonely recesses and wilds of distant mountains, in the savage Alpine gorges, at the foot of eternal glaciers, where reigns an appalling silence, broken only by the roar of a distant cataract, or the lonely thunder of the avalanche, or some shaded mountain-glen, and lonely vale of an isolated forest, or he would like to sit down on the brim of a limpid river, whose glossy water seems formed to mirror the lovely scenes on its margin: he is panting for solitude with the anxiousness of a traveller through Sahara for a source of a limpid water—but all in vain! as he is carrying within him the unremitting fountain of all his sufferings, as well as, superiority—his active and restless mind. He will never enjoy peace till his ever-active mind has worn out its tabernacle, and till, like a silk-worm, he has done spinning his own narrow coffin. We have an instance of that characteristic restlessness of mind in two great Italian poets, *Dante* and *Tasso:* the former carried along with him the hatred, the latter the love; and with these feelings both of them died.

But the most evident and unerring signs of *a poetical genius*, are plasticity, fertility, and facility of production. Every man of an intelligent and observing mind, out of the materials of his life, and his own recollections, may well afford to write one interesting novel, or one original comedy, but only a real poetical genius, such as *Lope de Vega*, exhibits that ceaseless fertility which pours like a perennial fountain.

The earliest breathings of Nature upon the poetical heart do not generally awaken a sound, which is their

own echo; the young poet is for a time a mockbird. What are his feelings when he first begins to exercise his powers, of whose intensity and reach he is quite in dark, we are unable to describe: we remark only how eager and tremulous must be all his hopes, how strange and tumultuous all his joys; how arduous is his difficulty of embodying his rich imaginings in mortal language; how sensibly his soul, so delicately strung, is alive to the touches of this rough world.

Poets and women are a very cautious set of politicians, as we have had occasion to aver in *Lord Byron's* and *Lamartine's* political career. Both were very anxious not to swerve from the beaten path, both exhibited a decided abhorrence of any newfangling. Placed on so conspicuous a stage, they seemed to be afraid only of the wings of their soaring imagination and the aspirations of their youth, and handled authority with the feelings of a woman who holds a loaded pistol in her hands. *Lord Byron* was greatly afraid of putting the bloody Turks in anger, and set-to teaching them the European international law; but an untimely death put a stop to his diplomatical career. *Lamartine*, in a moment of whirling frenzy and wild deeds, when the world seemed to consent to be remodelled, and when society was to be constructed upon a new foundation, followed anxiously the tradition of old, exploded diplomacy, and was only intent on the rounding of the French frontier, not towards the Rhine, but on the side of Savoy, then engaged in an unequal contest with Austria. He negotiated with foreign powers by means of a phrase, apt at once to reassure and to awe the world, a phrase which was so highly diplomatic as to leave not a shadow of meaning. Such a display

of a tamed down and sobered reason, such mocking of sound practical sense, so awkward an aping and mimickry of the coolness, foresight, self-possession, of the steady balanced views, which the business of active life requires, was a very amusing trick of legerdemain.

An extempore Poet, or Improvisatore.—It is one of those rare occasions when we are enabled to take Nature in the fact. What is generally going on under the veil of darkness, in the recesses of a sequestered solitude, anxiously avoiding witnesses, that is performed by an *improvisatore*, in our very presence, under our very eyes, filling us with rapture, entrancing in admiration, rousing astonishment, and creating a kind of pleasure we would feel looking on a pyramid built up in few minutes, or if a mighty oak would have sprung out of a gland in our presence. Improvisation is the most brilliant, dazzling, and amazing of all the achievements of the human mind. But are we to have recourse to the pallet and pencil of a painter, or the magnifying glass of a botanist? Are we to dip our pen into rainbow colours, and give a bold picture of this running stream of inspiration; or, coolly analyzing its astounding phenomena, go in search of veins and arteries which convey life to it? The visible pulsation of intellectual life, the very sight of an inspired person, with his mind so rich in thought, so strikingly endowed with the highest perfection of its faculties, is apt to excite the greatest enthusiasm. Look only at the workings of his mind, which pierce through and are beaming in his face; behold the flashes chasing each other in his sparkling eye. Look at the ready-born ideas and feelings, with their genuine, fresh colours, how they burst

forth, how with the swiftness of lightning, they are bodying forth in their proper words, and are arranged in verses and rhymes: behold the poetry coming forth and flowing with such rapidity as to puzzle your wits and render the most acute and quick faculty almost inefficacious and unavailing. Ideas spanning the whole world, magnificent pictures in their golden frames, feelings embodied in winged words, are every moment startling, running, and vanishing, like the silver streams of a rapid mountain-river. Of all our feelings and thoughts, which were dawning, but had no time to come to maturity, and swiftly disappeared, there remains nothing but astonishment. An *improvisatore* creates poetry at one stroke. "*Ecce Deus*" of the Virgilian sybil, seems to move the man, from whose lips issue forth a ready-fledged poetry with a swiftness hardly sufficient for a common mind to beget it.

An *extemporaneous song* flowing directly from the heart has great witchcraft and power over our minds. We put in it the greatest confidence, we love it, recognise in it our own feelings; for, flowing from the primary source, from the very bottom of our mind, it had no time to get warped, adulterated, or modified by conventional notions or fashion, and bears on its face a genuine and fresh resemblance of the human mind.

Practical genius.—Moral qualities of the mind appear to be more closely and visibly connected with intellectual powers in a practical genius than in any other form of it. We cannot account for the successes of a practical genius by his high mental capacities only; for his reason is constantly seen acting in company with certain not very common moral qualities—as calmness, coolness, self-possession, vigi-

lance, firmness, decision, or courage. In the execution of his schemes, he is always able to distinguish obstinacy from firmness, rashness from decision. It is only practical genius or a fool that is free from *indecision;* the first, because he can see his way clearly through the thousand difficulties, that encumber and bewilder the mind; the last because he sees nothing. But a thorough knowledge of the details and their minute investigation, which is generally despised by other forms of genius, as if beneath their dignity, forms the most important feature of a practical genius. This anxious scrutiny of the details is never a clog to the energy of their understanding, and does not prevent them from taking a large view of the matter before them. Men of practical genius are endowed with wonderful combination of intellectual faculties: as quick apprehension, ready wit, great sagacity—the whole consorted and subjected to the action of energetic will and powerful passions. They have a ready appreciation of the topics and arguments likely to prevail, sagacity in calculating moral causes and effects. They are capable of waiting their opportunity, husbanding their resources, penetrating the most latent springs of the human conduct, of comprehending and taking into account the interaction of numberless causes and effects, of originating and executing bold enterprises, in the face of many seemingly insuperable obstacles, and not only in spite of opposition, but often by the means of it. They neither suffer their understanding to be dazzled by enthusiastic anticipations, nor to become clouded by gloomy forebodings. Such men originate and control great revolutions, are changing the face of the world, govern both the actions of men, by a sagacious calculation of

their motives and their minds, by the magical power of their eloquence. Men with such a mode of genius are marked out by Nature to become conquerors, statesmen, popular leaders, as *Lord Clive*, *Martin Luther*, *William Pitt*, *Lord Wellington*, *Napoleon Bonaparte*.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.—Even supposing that every association of men is at the outset democratic, that in primitive ages of human society all had equal rights as well as duties, this happy state of society must have been but of a short duration. Aristocratical tendencies spring forth from the nature of men, who are sent into the world with very different and unequal endowments, capacities, and leanings, both moral and intellectual. There will start up some men, having more cunning, perspicacity, wisdom, or courage and hardihood, than the herd of their countrymen. People will look up to them with admiration and respect, which leads invariably to influence and authority. Those natural leaders of the people constitute the primitive germ of the future aristocracy. The advantages inseparable from authority will generate the wish to render it hereditary. The sons of the primitive aristocracy, generally without their merits, will succeed to their sentiments, influence, and authority: they will not fail to endeavour to keep the authority they have thus inherited, by a more secure tenure, that is, to become a hereditary and privileged aristocracy. One of them the strongest, the most gallant, or endowed with a paramount genius, or possessing a great fortune, will take their lead and render himself chief or king of the whole nation, which then may be considered as having attained its entire development. But now begins the struggle. The

aristocracy will but reluctantly yield to the authority of the chief, but recently their equal, whereas the chief will be desirous of bequeathing his enlarged authority to his successors unimpared; and in order to crush his former associates, he will call in aid the democracy: if successful, he will establish a monarchy. After having made use of the people, as the means of strengthening his dominion over the aristocracy, he will finish by oppressing both, and then we have despotism. But if the aristocracy, having lost their authority and influence, have contrived to preserve their ancient privileges, the people will have to support the despotism of the king and the privileges of the degenerated aristocracy, engrossing all civil, military, and ecclesiastical preferments; leaving to the people but to pay taxes and to shed their blood in dynastic wars. Such was the state of France before the revolution, which having abolished nobility and sent their king to the scaffold, was fast sinking, when *Bonaparte* started in his career. Of Italian extraction, born in Corsica, but brought up in France, in the military school of Brienne, where he learnt Latin with great reluctance; for literature and philology showed more than indifference, if not aversion; excelled only in mathematics, which seemed to indicate in him a common-place man with a barren mind, little fit for higher flights. Two circumstances, however, indicated that his mind was far from being of a common cast: he was generally wrapped up in his own thoughts, morose, silent, laconic, and exhibited a great predilection for historical books, particularly Polybius and Plutarch.

The French revolution drew some remarkable men from obscurity; *Bonaparte* came somewhat late in

that turmoil of passion, when a great part of the most clever, energetic or right-minded patriots, entangled by the fierce struggle of parties, lost their lives on the scaffold. The victory of *Montenotte* placed him on the brightest pages of history. When only twenty-seven years old, he grasped with an iron hand the highest authority in France, and, under the trite pretence of restoring order, established military despotism. His ambition and egotism have thrown a great shadow over his glory as the greatest captain of the age. The commemoration of *Washington* was only devised to delude the minds of the French people, and avert their attention from his wily machinations against liberty, which he stifled in France, and retarded its progress on the continent for a whole century, as the vain attempts of 1848 but too plainly show. *Despotism* and *Communism* (this last a new term, but an old thing) are natural enemies to liberty, and have entailed the greatest evils on humanity.

Bonaparte, endowed with a mixture of great and selfish qualities, was brave without being chivalrous; sometimes humane, seldom generous; of insatiable and inextinguishable ambition, but without a thirst of blood, and without a shadow of that magnanimity and honesty which characterized the Gothic races. Though incapable of self-sacrifice, he was devoted to posthumous fame, deeming that to live in the recollection of future ages, constituted the true immortality of the soul. He was endowed with iron hardihood of body, a quick and sure vision, a grasping mind, untiring power of thought, the habit of minute and laborious investigation, and that most rare faculty of coming to prompt and sure conclusions on sudden emergencies: he was able to calculate and combine

the most stupendous efforts with calmness and accuracy, to seize every occurring chance with unerring rapidity; enterprising to the utmost verge of daring consistent with reason, he never was urged to rashness by despair.

Without extensive information derived from study, he was guided by the result of his own observations. His overbearing and vast powers of intellect were in his youth adorned with a lively imagination. He was very partial to *Ossian*, held in great estimation the tragedies of *Corneille*, and betrayed in the outset of his wonderful career a poetical mind,—"Forty ages looking down from the top of pyramids! What will France say to it? What will say history and successive ages?" Those were truly poetical feelings, in a man treading a soil reeking with blood.

In the presence of his comprehensive and sharp-sighted genius, people had an appearance of moles. The sight of his mind was so clear and quick, that he penetrated a question and its solution, before many could have comprehended the terms in which it was proposed. Always quick-sighted, he possessed the rare combination of quick intelligence, with strong powers of judgment. He had an acute, inquisitive, and sprightly understanding. His mental powers, after a protracted contention, never showed any traces of weariness and lassitude. His intellect was the perfection of that of Celt or Greek. In his argumentation, he used to skip over the intermediate links. He did not reason cogently, but vigorously compressed his matter; he liked abbreviations of thought as well as abbreviations in writing. Endowed with ready wit, he was able to conceive distinctly and untangle the most complicated threads of thought. He used to anticipate

all the issues, consequences, and results of an event, and to be provided for all emergencies of victory, so that it never puzzled and confounded his mind, and always found him cool and clear-sighted; whereas the retreat of *Moscow* and the disaster of *Waterloo*, found him without resources; his clear and vast understanding appeared then benumbed and shrouded in a dense mist of despondency. His genius shone brightest in his transcendent skill in moving great masses and working the great combinations of war in the Winter Campaign in France in 1814-1815, when, with one army, he was opposed to two. His military talents and political combined, were displayed in the boldly devised movement towards Belgium, by which he reduced the many chances against him to an even one at Waterloo.

He was apt to forget names, terms, and dates; but remembered perfectly every peculiarity of an event and every circumstance connected with a locality. He used to scrutinize and scan every occurrence till he had got to the bottom of it and left it threadbare; but in the hurry of a discussion he often betrayed his most secret thoughts. His mental vision promptly adjusted itself to the degree of light, and the distance or the proximity of the object, as the exigences of the great or little in life demanded. He liked to calculate, to form a just estimate in numbers and know positively what it comes to; the versatility of his intellect was so wonderful, that, like the tent of the Arabian tales, he was able of contracting its powers to the particulars of his daily expenses when in the Tuileries, or of dilating it to the vast and complicated policy of Europe. He used to exert his acuteness even on subjects too remote from the habits of his thought—as

for instance, the science of law. A conqueror, crowned with the laurels of victory achieved by his genius, determination, and an iron hand, may well descant upon the civil code, and earn applause from his crouching courtiers, who with a well-put-on look of admiration were extolling his unparalleled wisdom; but his whole administration of France showed that he had no idea of law, and did not respect what he was quite ignorant of. He was very quick in ascertaining and appreciating the peculiar capacities of men, and thence very happy in the choice of his tools; but every time he met with virtuous feeling of patriotism, or with a man of higher aspirations, he was seen making mistakes and bungles, as was the case with the Polish hero *Kosciusko*, for he did not believe in the existence of virtue. He despised philosophy, that is, a close inquiry into his acts and schemes, and was sure of exposing philosophers to the laugh, mockery, and contempt of the people, by marking them with the ambiguous appellation of ideologues. But not only the moral side of mankind was a blank page for him, it appears that he never was capable to see through the mysteries of the English and Austrian governments: he seems to have always been in the dark as to where the practical authority of these two states resided, as may be inferred from his marriage with an Austrian archduchess, his flight on board an English frigate, and his surmises about *Lord Wellington*.

He had no notion of the style, and thought lightly of the art of writing. His occasional figurative language, his happy originality of expression, was the result of a sudden access of inspiration, and his war-bulletins read as if they had been written by Dumas.

He felt no enthusiasm, peculiar to Italians, for music; he only remarked that it procured a kind of refreshment to his wearied mind, and turned off his thoughts into a new channel. He was unable to discern the harmony in language, and could never repeat one single rhyme without spoiling its measure. Some loftier aspirations of his mind were early stifled by ambition. His great fortune spoiled and tainted his character. Though born an *Agamemnon*, he stooped to the wily and tortuous course of a *Ulysses*. A giant, he dwindled into a dwarf, when the reports of eavesdroppers returning from the faubourg St. Germain wholly engrossed his mind. After having raised gorgeous monuments, arches, and columns to his fame, he took to building state-prisons for his subjects.

It was remarked, that about the fortieth year of his age, the strength of his body as well as his mind began to give way. When at St. Helena, where he had full leisure to reflect and read, his views were enlarged, he became more enlightened, but at the same time it was visible that his mind began to sink under the weight of his misfortunes, aggravated by a hard captivity and a lurking disease, without any distraction that could have prevented his spirits from preying on themselves; and it was asserted by persons that had a daily occasion of observing him, that, even set free, he would have never retrieved his former determination, firmness of character, and vigour of intellect.

Not entirely deprived of religious feelings, he was however without any fixed idea on religion, but had a strong conviction of its necessity as a tool of government. One day, when arguing against the predominating opinion, hostile to any religion, he added, "last

Sunday, amidst a solemn silence of Nature, when taking a walk in my gardens (of Malmaison), I heard on a sudden the chimes in the neighbouring *Rueil*, which revived in my mind all my youthful feelings. Religion is of absolute necessity to men. I believe in the existence of God." Then lifting up both hands, "For who has created all this?" said he, with enthusiasm.

He had also some prejudices lingering about his heart, even when in the full tide of prosperity. In a small society, by twilight, he sometimes liked to tell goblin stories, or a tale that was intended to prove the possibility of presentiments. Once he thus began his serious tale,—"It is beyond doubt, that we have a foreboding of the death of a dear person that happened to die in a distant country, and that we see the apparition of the deceased before he is dead." After this grave preliminary, he thus went on—"One of the courtiers of Louis XIV. was standing in the gallery of Versailles, when the king began reading the report of Marshal Villars, in which he announced his victory at Friedlingen; on a sudden the courtier perceives the shadow of his son, who was in the army: 'My son is dead!' cried he, in the very moment when the king read his name out of the list of the wounded and slain." When about to quit Egypt, he thus addressed *Monge*—"I find myself here, conqueror of Egypt, marching in the footsteps of *Alexander;* but I should have preferred following those of *Newton.*" "But *Newton* had almost exhausted the field of discovery in physics," replied *Monge*, adding, that he left nothing to those who might follow. "By no means," was the remarkable reply of *Bonaparte*, "*Newton* dealt with masses of matter and with their movements; *I*

should have sought in the atoms for the laws by which worlds have been constructed." This great idea begins now to dawn on the field of sciences in the nebular system, and spontaneous generation.*

Duke of Wellington, born in Ireland, but of English descent, in the same year as his illustrious antagonist *Napoleon Bonaparte*—the whole of whose dazzling career was but an episode of his protracted life—contemporary and colleague of *Liverpool*, *Melville*, *Sidmouth*, *Castlereagh*, *Bathurst*, and *Sir Robert Peel*, he was brought up in a French military school at Anger, entered the army as ensign in 1787. In 1798, he was at Calcutta with *Lord Mornington*, his brother, then governor-general, under whose auspices he started in his Indian career, which laid the foundation of his high and unprecedented fortunes. In the meantime, *General Bonaparte*, landing in Egypt, had entered into communication with *Tippoo Saib*. This was the beginning of that gigantic struggle which finished at Waterloo. The night attack upon "the Tope," near Seringapatam, was the first service and the only failure of the duke. His next exploit, as governor and commander-in-chief

* "I believe all animals to be descended from primitive forms of life, forming an integral part of the globe itself; and that the successive varieties of animals and plants, which the dissection of the strata of the earth clearly sets forth, is due to the occurrence of geological epochs, of the power which we cannot form any true conception of." Dr. Knox.—*A Manual of Artistic Anatomy.*—We must refer our readers to the *National Intelligencer* of 1852, where *Mr. Ogden*, American Consul at Liverpool, gives an account of his visit to *Mr. Crosse*, an amateur philosopher of Somersetshire, and to a dissertation of *Mr. G. Gros* in *Bulletin de la Société des Naturalistes de Moscow*, with fifteen plates, and remind them of the *Euglena sanguinea* and *Euglena viridis*, which, kept in darkness, become animals, but laid out in the sun, become plants.

of Mysore, was the defeat of the robber *Dhoondiah Wag*. The battle with Mahrattas at the village of Assaye was his first victory. Returned to England, he passed the next three years as Irish secretary, privy councillor, and member of Parliament. In August, 1808, he commenced the Peninsular war, and in the same year won his first Peninsular victory at the battle of Roliça. Then followed the famous passage of the Douro, the drawn battle of Talavera, the victory of Ciudad Rodrigo, the battle of Salamanca, where he displayed the sudden inspiration of genius and courage. At the last battle of the Peninsular war, fought at Toulouse, he was but forty-five years old. His glorious military career closed with the victory at Waterloo, and near forty years of his life elapsed, without his having commanded troops in the field.

The early part of his career, his war with the Mahrattas, goes to prove that he had not only all the quickness of perception, decision, and energy requisite upon the field of battle, but that he was endowed also with those general principles which are only to be found when reflection and a long experience have been engrafted upon a natural genius for the art of war. There never was a man less indebted to chance. His steady progress in the Peninsular war went on against the current of fortune. Not foresighted, but always seeing right, with more sense than elevation; not wide in range of thought, nor deep of subtlety, he possessed a peculiar sagacity and steadiness of judgment. He had a knack of readjusting his arrangements to new circumstances more quickly than his illustrious antagonists, *Massena* and *Soult*, for the very reason, as he said, that his original plan was not perfect, and the mending

by so much more easy, as you can knot broken rope more easily than the leathern harness. Combining the perception of what was to be done with the perfect insight of how it was to be executed, he triumphed over his colossal antagonist. His intuitive and cool understanding pierced at once through the surface which entangles the imagination or kindles the sympathy of the feelings. Without brilliant faculties of invention and contrivance, without an extended range of foresight, without a subtle comprehension of the changing times, his clearness of discernment, correctness of judgment, his integrity and rectitude of mind, were the principal elements of his military achievements, and of his unprecedented authority in the councils of England. He was not given to theorizing, knew nothing of reading the signs of the time, and disliked political change rather instinctively than from a deep insight into their ultimate tendencies and significance. His mental faculties, unerring when applied to definite facts, sometimes failed in the appreciation of causes which had not hitherto come under his observation, but he was open to fair argument in the discussion of his own principles. His Despatches, published by the late *Colonel Gurwood*, clear, precise, pithy, are his literary monument. Their conspicuous straightforwardness and emphatic truth, the sound apprehension of passing events, are the best reflection of both his mind and intellect.

Musical genius is the least akin to and the least associated with any other; however, among ancient Greeks, poetry and music were sisters, and went together. The most beautiful and natural union was not rent asunder in the Middle Ages. Troubadours were poets and musicians at a time. *Dante* consecrated a

whole canto to his intimate friend the musician, *Casella*, who was just entering purgatory, and who at his request sung his favourite song—*Amor che nella mente mi ragiona*—with such sweetness of melody, that the whole bevy of souls forgot they were to enter purgatory; this scene is represented in the picture of a young Genoese painter—*Cogorno*, which we had occasion to admire at Genoa, in the saloon of *Mr. Michael Prus de Vizensky*. It is a very remarkable circumstance, and which as yet appears not to have attracted the attention of profound philosophy, that musicians, and especially composers, as for instance, *Beethoven*, when composing his symphony in C minor . . . . . .*

* Here the manuscript abruptly ends, as by some accident two whole leaves were torn away.

THE END.

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