



Shakespeare and Milton could only write eloquently with the book of nature and the book of God open before them, but these appear to be proficients without either. But three hobbies have come before us most plainly by a manuscript paper which has just been shown us, written by one of these youthful adepts, son of one of the City princes, who, among other things, is not only son of the light, but is looking out and preparing for the triumph. Who speaks of this being the fifty anniversary of this conception, and only requests the drinking of that number, to have it taught, disseminated, and observed in our schools. He gives many arguments and many objections of the causes of things—and he might be of some service to his chief if it were only to show him how little labour there is required to make converts of the youth, the ladies, or the crew of a merchant. And a word might be inserted in regard to these princes of commerce and enterprise; in many respects we have need to be proud of them; but they must not always expect honour and fame: the best of their energies are employed in more active pursuits: it is but natural to think that they have but little inclination for studies of depth and desire; that those beautiful instruments for looking up at the Moon, and those to examine insects and worms, sometimes derive in the imagination that they are wise; and they have a habit, particularly strong of consulting their glance, not to other centuries, but only to their own age.

But what contributes greatly to the satisfaction of this youthful graduate, is the favour of a popular, and in some respects eminent journal, called *The Times*. And indeed he might well be proud for in this article referred to *The Times* actually compares his promoter to Newton and other great names. But this you know was the same journal that, in its simple innocence, could not believe that the Russians were approaching Constantinople, until they had crossed the Bosphorus straits and the town of Adrianople. So that this will reflect on somewhat, and track us sometimes to various opinions of such publications. But this alliance which they would make us hardly be allowed; though it cannot be denied they have written very largely, they have printed many books, and have worked with assiduity and labour. Others as well as these are known: a gentleman who is troubled with the painful belief that there are great men himself, has written some twenty or thirty volumes upon his peculiar opinions of art; and though it may be that a saturnal moon wrote a history of thirty-thousand letters, consisting of the empire of the East, it should not be thought that that might away has never been rivaled, or that the saturnal are the greatest of all peoples. Look after look, and volume after

volume and volume of letters, it would appear they are increasing the labour for themselves—and consulting rather than extending the number of services might be more prudent a plan for them to arrive at their goal. But they are no doubt a splendid set of men, and the way with which they move millions in their minds is something remarkable. If some daring person suggests that the dogs on the Egyptian monuments are similar to our own; they reply that the Egyptians could not be very accurate delineators, or, for any apparent mistake the time is short; and to carry their point they are perfectly willing to add thousands, tens of thousands, nay, millions of years to their writing and captions made. They might by way of introduction to their idea, have spent much time and many volumes in endeavoring to corrupt our taste; for in these figures which they portray for us, the common maxims of proportion, of beauty and taste are very carefully observed. We are not accustomed to be taught to look at nature as if things were only, unattainable or unnecessary; great minds and great volumes have spoken of the suitability of nature in all its manifestations—all animals being supplied with organs for sustenance or defence, for usefulness and preservation. But those animals which they depict excite more of the monsters and demagogues of nature, rather than of its ordinary and uniform course.

This philosophy is not a new discovery as some would make it, but more a modification of something very old. Plato conceived and suggested that the universe was created through some mystical arrangement in the idea of Number: in this material conception he seems much to have declined from the precepts of his great master; but it is supposed that some of his fantastic notions he imbibed after his journey in Italy. Other of these philosophers adopted, that in matter there is some kind of soul, and an inherent sensation of movement, creation, and power. There was a notion in one of the Reformers (but not one of conspicuous name) also, analogous to this: who was led to imagine that there was, even in material nature itself, a kind of power and sensation, which would rebound to the praise and the glory of God. But perhaps the most fruitful source of these material hobbies, is to be found in the wondrous times of the Roman Empire: when though the faculty of intelligence seemed developed, there was a lack among them of that "small part" (it is the saying of one of the old sages, "that we call a man wiser from that small part which prevails him")—when that part seemed not very prevalent—and when every fresh political disturbance was the cause of breeding another variety of insensibility faculties; and these in their turn giving way before another batch, still more insensibility, or still more fanciful.

right might—at least unless he deigned to notice our great poet—"I think, The nightingale, if she should sing by day, When every grove is caroling, would be thought, No longer a musician than the wren." And it might be well to give a quotation from those celebrated dialogues, in which the sophists appear not in the least to dream of the power and superiority of Socrates.

"Another celebrated sophist (continues the historian) was Hippias of Elis, who flourished at the Olympic games, and there was nothing in the whole range of the arts and sciences, which he did not know; and that he was not only a perfect master of the liberal arts, geometry, music, poetry, &c., but that the ring which he then wore, his robe, and his buskins, were all manufactured by his own hand, &c." The two persons of the dialogues are Isocrates and Hippias:—

"Is. Why Hippias, worthy and wise Sir, what a long time it is since you visited us at Athens!"

H. Very true; for I have no leisure, Socrates. For the state of Elis, when it wants to negotiate anything with another city, always comes first to me, to choose me for its ambassador, thinking me to be the most competent judge and interpreter of the proposals made on the part of the respective cities. I have therefore frequently gone as ambassador to other cities, but most frequently, and upon affairs of the greatest moment, to Lacedæmon; for which reason that I may answer your enquiry, I don't come very often into these parts.

Is. Such a fine thing it is, Hippias, to be a truly wise and perfectly accomplished man. You, for instance, are able, in your private capacity, while you receive large sums from the young men, to give them in return more than their money's worth; and in your public character, to benefit your country, as every man must, who would not be despised, but thought highly of by people in general. But pray tell me, Hippias, what can be the reason, why these ancient worthies, who are so celebrated for wisdom, Pittacus and Bias, and Thales of Miletus, and his successors down to Anaxagoras; all, or most of them, appear to have kept aloof from political transactions?"

H. What other reason, d'ye think, Socrates, than their inability, and incapacity to master by the force of their understanding, the arts, both of public and private life.

Is. Do you mean to say then, that as the other arts have advanced, and the ancient pretensions of them have been far surpassed by those of our days; so the art which you suppose profuse, has improved, and that the old philosophers are nothing compared to you?

H. You have exactly hit upon the truth." The historian continues, "That he then goes on to

the evening, the gently descending sun, the moon's brightness at our feet; and against that of which the poet very beautifully speaks, "Love taught him silence, and shame, with love at strife, thus taught him sweet division of life." And those indeed who saw the most beauties of these seasons are the walls and vaults of society. It is all very well to say that he study natural things and botany means one to enjoy a walk more; but they do not generally stop here. Solon was it recorded, "Spoke of trees, from the cedar tree that in Lebanon even unto the lily, that sprang forth out of the wall; he spoke also of flowers, and of fruit, and of creeping things, and of fishes." And yet all this knowledge is merely worth preserving in comparison of the monuments of his wisdom. There are perhaps some sensible divines who set up with three lines: some have or displace an opinion of society, that they give to understand not in this department only, that they would like throw out some dissertations to men it from more dangerous stores. A knowledge of the herbs, creation is not very necessary, but still it may be a desirable accomplishment; they often serve as valuable illustrations and figures; and are used by most eminent writers and poets, as well as by the divine preman to figure and clothing of thoughts. Superstitions were forbidden as fatal at the giving of the law; and this moderation has been taken not only as a moral of moderation, but as a mode for indicating the corruptors and propagators of the truth. The fallow and required to eradicate of plants has indeed another volume from this province (indeed this has drawn forth the writing of *The Times*) and it might have been left alone and admired, probably in some respects; and when it is made so much of and the author applauded to the skies, and among the most noble and great, it is time to say a word in their behalf—and to bid that this notion of the perfection of plants, has been known, and spoken of much more beautifully, long before in the book of Job:—"For there is hope of a tree, if it be not dead, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof was old in the earth, and the stock thereof die to the ground, yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant." And if they thought of humbling us, and showing our inferiority to plants; that is also done in some respects in the next verse:—"But man sprouts, and withers away; you must pluck up the plant, and where is he?" And as for this little-dream of a flower strutting those men with the great and the renowned of the earth; and to be one of the reformers for propagating those fallen over Europe; if this were its only hobby, it might be called an insensibility of people, an insensibility of great men, an insensibility of greatness and of God.

In faithfulness,

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Tenby, Dec., 1850.