KNOWING AND FEELING:

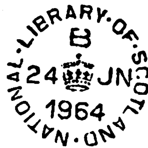
A CONTRIBUTION TO PSYCHOLOGY.

BY WILLIAM SMITH.

With a Memoir.

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.
1874.

Digitized by Google



PRINTED BY T. AND A. CONSTABLE, PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY,
AT THE EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY PRESS.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

Of the following papers three have appeared in *The Contemporary Review*; the fourth was left in MS. I am not sure that it had received the writer's final revision, or that I have throughout deciphered it correctly. But I think that to those for whom this volume is intended it will add to the interest of the unfinished work.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

KNOWING AND FEELING: A CONTRIBUTION TO PSYCHOLOGY—

	PAGE
PART I.	1
II. SOME FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE WILL, .	37
III. SPECULATIVE THOUGHT, ...	63
IV. OUR PASSIONS, ...	94
MEMOIR, ...	125
APPENDIX, ...	247

PHOTOGRAPHS—

AS A CHILD, ...	*facing*	130
BUST, ...	,,	167

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

KNOWING AND FEELING:

A CONTRIBUTION TO PSYCHOLOGY.

PART I.

To one fresh from physiological studies Psychology is seldom acceptable. Indeed, our mental philosophy is now accustomed to the language of apology, and generally presents herself with some preliminary word to justify her appearance at all.

The physiologist is plainly in the ascendant. Let us do honour to his discoveries; let us confess that it is in his department alone that we can look forward here to what can properly be called discovery. I can understand and forgive the somewhat petulant mood in which he occasionally speaks of the psychologist, or metaphysician;—for he is apt to confound them together, regarding them as the same creature in different stages of development, in which, I think, he is far from being wrong. He looks upon our self-examinant, turning his mind in upon itself, as some pensive idler, sitting apart with finger on his brow, revolving what has been a thousand times revolved before, and to no earthly purpose. Perhaps he pictures

Digitized by Google

him as one who ducks his head beneath the stream, and, *in that position*, looks upward to its source. Whilst he, the man of science, and the free observer of the whole course of things, is busy in the dissecting-room, tracing the threads of that delicate machinery by means of which the world of space, the world of form, and force, and motion, transforms itself, through the sensibilities of a man, into a world of thought, of beauty, of intelligence. By ingeniously devised experiments he is extorting an answer to his questions from Nature herself.

I can excuse his impatience. I, for my part, have no wish to plague him with my psychology. If he is a phrenologist, or working in that direction, he will have to plague himself with a somewhat elaborate system of psychology; else how name his organs, or even know what organ to seek? If he has arrived at the conclusion—the conclusion of some of the most eminent anatomists—that the brain, as organ of consciousness, complex though it be, may still be considered as one organ—he will probably have wrought out for himself some scheme not unlike that of which I am about to give the outline. In any case, the intelligent physiologist has, doubtless, knowledge enough of this kind to guide him in his experiments, and enable him to interpret their results. Perhaps it is well that he should not be zealously devoted to any one system of psychology, that he may remain unbiassed in his observations, and both see and describe his facts in as dry a light as possible.

It appears to me as certain as to him that we do, in fact, step from organic life into consciousness. (I must

Digitized by Google

leave others to determine whether what are called purely vital phenomena are not a higher order of physical phenomena, resolvable into chemistry, electricity, and the like. I may be permitted to speak of physical, vital, mental facts as three distinct orders.) Some vital or organic function seems to precede, and perhaps to follow, every manifestation of mind. There can hardly, therefore, be a branch of study of greater interest than that which traces the connexion between physical or purely vital properties and psychical properties. But these last, which in their nature are clearly distinct from the physical or vital properties on which they are grafted, can define themselves only to the man reflecting on *them*. This reflection on ourselves is simply indispensable. We can know ourselves as conscious beings in no other way. This very self, this personality, this *I* that rings for ever through human speech, belongs essentially to the consciousness. What my consciousness rests on is a distinct and specific inquiry. It may rest on the brain; the brain destroyed it may cease; but while it exists it carries within it its own personality. The light of thought may go out when the lamp is shattered, but while it burns, *that*, and not the lamp, is the self; the *I* of human speech. Whether thought and feeling rest directly on the brain or on some intermediate substance we call spirit, shall be an open question if you will; but the personality lies in thought itself. It lies, as I take it, in the union of memory and anticipation. It is thought embracing the present, the past, the future, travelling on for ever—an ever-present thought, that embraces a future that will be past, and a past which has been future. I have

Digitized by Google

been, I shall be, are but the past and future seen constantly in the present.

Be that as it may, mind as it is in itself must be studied in the mind. A curious sophistical objection has been lately raised against the process of reflection, or self-examination, which perhaps should be noticed, since it has been paraded with an air of confidence by ardent supporters of the "physiological method," and claims the authority of Auguste Comte. "In order to observe," it is said, "your intellect must pause from activity; yet it is the very activity you want to observe. If you cannot effect the pause you cannot observe; if you do effect it there is nothing to observe."

Now it is plain that we cannot think of any subject of personal or scientific interest, and be, at that same instant, occupied in self-criticism or self-inspection. But the very next instant we may find ourselves reviving our past thoughts and feelings, and noticing some peculiarity in them *as thought and feeling.* A man accustomed to self-observation finds himself repeatedly summoning back his experiences, his emotions, or ideas, asking himself perhaps by what process they came into his mind. The moral man exercises this self-inspection for a moral purpose, to detect the insidious approaches of some besetting passion; the psychologist for his psychological purpose, to compare and discriminate his feelings, or detect his laws of association. There is no pause in the activity of the mind, but this purpose gives it a new direction. It is a method of inquiry perfectly valid. That it needs to be supplemented by other methods will be readily acknowledged.

I intimated that the distinction often drawn between

Digitized by Google

the psychologist and the metaphysician was one of a somewhat fallacious description. It is quite true that a writer or lecturer may discourse instructively on memory or judgment, imagination or reasoning, and not plunge himself into those abstruse discussions about being, cause, or the absolute, which are set apart by some as the especial domain of metaphysics or ontology. He may choose his illustrations from the common affairs of life. But, on the other hand, there are some topics which the psychologist cannot avoid, and which carry him, whether he will or not, into the domain of the metaphysician. One of his earliest subjects, our perception of the external world, cannot be pursued without leading into these very discussions of substance or being. How will he define his matter? If he calls it *phenomenal*, the very name suggests the dreaded *noumenon*. Will he give two substances, matter and spirit, defined each by their properties? Will he speak only of properties, and carry us down—or up—to the one absolute and self-existent from which all evolves, or by whom all is created? Some theory he seems compelled to form. Psychology expands into a system of philosophy. It is always the vestibule to any structure of this kind we may raise.

I.

I ask myself what it is to be conscious? or, in other words, what is the simplest form of mind?

If an animal moved when touched—if the stimulant that set the animal in motion was clearly a sensation, and if we rested *there*—if the animal were merely sensitive, and a series of movements were simply initiated by a sen-

Digitized by Google

sation, if it never rose to any knowledge of its own movements, of its own body, of the relation of that body to other bodies—if, in short, it were utterly destitute of cognition or knowledge of any kind, should we say that it was conscious? Assuredly not. We should have before us a kind of vital mechanism, whose co-ordinated movements were stimulated by sensation, but we should not have before us a voluntary agent or a conscious creature. Desire would be absent, for desire implies certain elementary cognitions. It might move *to* this, or *from* that, but there would be no consciousness of a *to* or *from*, a *this* or *that*.

Evidently, therefore, in addition to vital movement and sensibility, a creature must have knowledge before we pronounce it to be conscious. It is not in pure and isolated sensation that the psychologist can find his starting-point. There is no such thing in the consciousness. He starts from a perception or cognition of some kind—sensations held together by the relations of time or space.

I accept the current definition of knowledge or cognition. It is a perception of relation. And for this perception of relation I can select no better word than that of judgment. It has been already used in this wide and technical sense. Sensibilities and judgments are the two elements that form the simplest state of consciousness. Nor are there any others in the most complex. The relations of time, space, and contrast between sensations themselves as pleasurable and painful, are the earliest that arise. The simplest state of consciousness is both a knowing and a feeling; a knowing so far that there is some relation apprehended, and

Digitized by Google

a feeling so far that there is some sensation felt, pleasurable or painful: for I demur to the supposition that there can be sensations absolutely neutral. As sensibilities and judgments form our perceptions, and as these enter into our relations in thought, forming what we call new objects of thought; and as these new objects, or ideas, are themselves the source of new or modified feelings and emotions (a higher order of sensibility), it is plain that our two great elements of judgment and feeling can never be absent from our consciousness.

A sharp twinge of pain, I may be told, is assuredly a consciousness. I am assuredly conscious of it. But alone it would not form a state of consciousness; it must be connected, as it invariably is, with other sensations, forming some perceptive state: it is felt here or there, has a before and after. A twinge of pain, however sharp, quite isolated in a vital frame, would not be an instance of consciousness.

I can *think* of an isolated sensation. But I do this by contrasting it with sensations not isolated. I can imagine it. But if I myself, so far as my mental attributes are concerned, consisted of nothing but this isolated sensation, I should not be a conscious creature.

The senses and the memory—which as a mere repetition of sensations has justly been called an internal sense—these give us consciousness by reason of some perceived relations that hold them together. To hold together what is different—the several in the one consciousness—is of the essence of mind. The mental unit, if such an expression may be used, always consists of terms and a relation. We cannot in our earliest

Digitized by Google

perceptions separate the two: we are compelled to recognise them as both complex and indivisible.

Where, in fact, should we find such a thing as a solitary or isolated sensation? The structure of all the higher animals is such that if you awaken one sensibility you awaken others also, and these sensibilities belong to some central organ, in which they are not only felt, but felt together, and felt as different. A smell seems as simple a sensation as we can imagine, but a smell brings into play the muscles of the nose, and prompts to some movement of the head. Most sensations prompt to movement of some kind, and that before we move for a purpose, and there is that *consensus* or co-ordination in our movements, that the sensations accompanying many muscular contractions may be introduced by the slightest excitement. A pleasant taste, one of the earliest pleasures of the infant, is inevitably connected with the movement of the lips and the tongue. Sight, which is distributed so largely through the animal creation, and is manifested so early in most animals, is not only no solitary sensation, but is not even a number of sensations of different colours. Explain vision by what theory we will, it consists of form traced in different lights *outside the body* of the creature who sees; and therefore the knowledge of the body, as introduced by other senses, must co-exist in the consciousness, and form part of what we call vision. This is not a case of association of ideas, or law of habit; sight appears in many animals too soon to admit of this explanation; we have simply a confluence of sensations and perceptions, forming this new cognition or perception. Touch, again, as mere sensation,

Digitized by Google

may be a pleasure or a pain; but as a perception, as it actually enters into our consciousness, it comes, as is universally admitted, with other sensations traceable to muscular contraction. What passes in that central organ which converts these various sensations into perceptions, into cognitions, into a consciousness? I know not. We only know that the *together* of sensations and repetitions of sense result in what we call a judgment, a perceived relation, an object of cognition.

I do not care to perplex myself with the question whether there are any animals so framed as to be sensitive only, and not conscious, not cognitive. A low order of animalculæ, mere cells, borne hither and thither by the medium in which they float; or even larger creatures, like our jelly-fish, may be endowed with a certain dull sensibility as their only psychical quality. But the animal which has any of our special senses, and which has to seek its food, must have, we should say, cognition as well as sensibility.

Sensations held together in the one consciousness—*the together of the different*—implying a judgment, a relation perceived, this is the most elementary form of mind. Not the solitary nerve, but the ganglion with its nerves stretching here and there, is the type of our simplest consciousness. The relation perceived is a fundamental fact—fundamental as sensation itself, with which it is connected,—and is the foundation of all our knowledge.

II.

There are writers of great repute who, as the last result of their analysis, find sensation to be the sole

Digitized by Google

element of mind. Sensations, the memory and anticipation of sensations, and laws of association, forming new groups of such memories—these suffice to build up the mind of man. The sense of contrast, they consider as involved in sensibility itself. Without change sensibility cannot be prolonged. First to feel, and then remember the change, is all that is needed for what I have called the perception of the relation of contrast. To remember change is to remember successions also—there is the relation of time: judgment is reduced to memory. At all events, these two judgments, contrast and succession, seem easily resolved into sensation and memory, and these two, they think, will suffice, with the aid of certain subtle laws of association, to construct the consciousness.

But in this account we have not, I apprehend, resolved judgment into memory, but have, in fact, introduced this new element under the name, and as a part, of memory. The *knowledge* of a succession of sensations, it will be admitted, is something very different from the *succession itself*—the mere flux and change of sensibilities. Therefore the memory is introduced to bring back into one consciousness a portion of this flowing succession. Originally each sensibility had vanished when its successor appeared, but in memory the procession, or part of it, is brought back, and antecedent and sequent perceived as such. But if this be so, we have introduced into the memory a quite new element which did not exist in sensation. If the memory were a mere reproduction of the original flux of sensibilities, it, too, would still be the same flowing succession, where each ripple was gone when

Digitized by Google

the next came. If we have assigned to the memory this new power of holding together in the one consciousness what originally was a mere flux of sensibilities, and so cognising the succession, we have simply introduced the element of judgment, or the perception of relations as part of memory.

Memory, when it is something more than a mere reproduction, when it implies a knowledge that such reproduction belonged to the past, is itself based on a judgment. A revived sensibility would in itself be only another kind of sensibility. It is relegated to the past in a state of consciousness which embraces a present also. Consciousness, therefore, so to speak, is wider than memory: memory exists in it.

The relation of contrast appears at first sight to be involved in sensibility itself. A state of sensibility, speaking physiologically, could not be sustained without change; the nerve requires rest, other nerves must be brought into action. But here, too, I must repeat that the apprehension of the change is something different from the actual change itself. If you describe the transition as a feeling, and say there is *a feeling of change*, that feeling would pass with others in the same unapprehended series, were there nothing but the series. Here also you must call in the aid of memory, and give to the memory this power of grasping the several in one act of consciousness; which power we find necessary to all consciousness, whether of the perception that manifestly precedes memory, or of that thought which is so largely made up of the revived past.

If even these judgments or perceived relations of

Digitized by Google

time or succession, and of contrast and similarity, could be resolved into mere acts of memory, what are we to say to the relations of space or position constituting *form*, or the external appearance? It is true that the utmost subtlety of some of our subtlest thinkers has been put in requisition to deduce our idea or knowledge of extension from that of succession in time. In England, I believe, Brown first ventured on this hypothesis. Sir William Hamilton was thought to have demolished it, but it has been revived by two, if not three, of our most celebrated contemporaries. There were good reasons why this effort should be made. In the first place, there is a startling incongruity in the fact that sensations should be to us the terms of this relation—that they should uphold the relation of position even within our own body. What have sensations to do with space, as themselves space-occupants? There is a delusion here, and it seems more satisfactory to unravel the delusion than to accept it as one forced on us by nature. And, secondly, if the relation which constitutes form could be deduced from that of succession, one great obstacle would be removed to the theory I have already glanced at, that builds up the intellect out of sensation, and memory, and habit. I admit that I ought here to examine this hypothesis that deduces extension from succession, as lately put forth by Professor Bain and Mr. J. S. Mill, but I must defer such examination to another opportunity. It would require more room than I could give it; it would require room for many quotations. I must beg a verdict against them. I must content myself with the counter-assertion (in which the great majority of

Digitized by Google

psychologists agree) that the two relations of time and space are fundamentally different, and that neither can be deduced from the other. They blend and meet in the idea of motion; but they are always recognised as distinct, neither of them admitting of analysis.

When Kant asserts of space that it is a mode of sensibility, he expresses, I presume, the same truth that I endeavour to convey by saying that the relation of position, or the knowledge of space, is introduced directly by our sensations. And when the physiologist refers to his nerves of touch and sight, and speaks of points of sensation felt, or perceived, at the periphery, he does but express the same truth. One sensation could not give position. Many do; but how? It seems a very familiar fact that the sensation should be felt *there* where the sensitive extremities are, and that a number of these *theres* should constitute a form. But it is one of those familiar facts which grow more marvellous and perplexing as we reflect upon them. What are the respective parts performed by the nerves and the ganglion? Plainly, we have left physical properties and are amongst psychical properties, and of that character that we have only to state them in the best language we can select. We find (1.) The sensibilities; and (2.) The relation of position perceived.

The perception of the relation is here inseparable from the concrete in which it appears. A form can only be dissected into minuter forms, in each of which the same relations of position, of sides and surfaces, reappear. When afterwards we compare forms with each other and perceive the relation of magnitude, the

Digitized by Google

two terms of the relation can be separately cognised. And as this is the case wherever we are accustomed to use the word judgment, it seems a strained application of the word when we apply it to a case where the terms and the relation are inseparable. But no other word is more applicable. And it should be remembered that where the terms are distinct, as where the two forms are separate, between which we perceive the relation of magnitude, even here the terms and the relation form a new whole. We cannot think of magnitude, which is a matter of comparison, without the forms that are compared. We make the abstraction of a relation, of which we have had innumerable instances, and may speak, if we please, of the *idea* of magnitude. But magnitude itself can never be represented in consciousness, but by the two forms and the relation. In like manner we can speak of the relation of means and end without having before us any specific instance of means and an end. But this is an abstraction, framed mainly by the aid of language, and for the communication of thought; the relation cannot really be brought home to the mind without the terms we call means and end.

If I had been writing this psychological sketch some thirty years ago, I might have said that the sensational school was well-nigh extinct, and have spared myself the labour of contending for a distinct intellectual element in the consciousness on which knowledge depends. It was the habit then to speak of that school as the philosophy of the eighteenth century, as if it was already a matter of history. We of the nineteenth century, if not satisfied with what the Scotch

Digitized by Google

professors taught, had gone to Germany for our metaphysics. Cousin, for the moment, was the representative of France. But the place physiology has lately taken in our studies has revived the desire in many for the simplest possible scheme of psychology. It seems easy to attribute to the brain a variety of sensibilities, and if thought is nothing but such sensibilities connected and revived in memory, there appears no difficulty in allying it altogether with the brain; the transition is rendered conceivable from purely vital to mental phenomena. I do not say that all who have sought a simple scheme of psychology have been biassed by their physiology, or by what are called materialistic views. Simplicity is itself at all times a legitimate aim of the theorist. And, on the other hand, there are many wedded to their physiological method (the phrenologists, for instance), who wield a very complex psychology. I merely take notice of a tendency I have detected in my own mind. The preconception that there is a transition from chemistry to life, and from life to consciousness, leads us to favour those theories which make such transitions representable to the imagination.

To me the old objection rings in the ear. If knowledge is finally reduced to sensation, this is tantamount to there being no knowledge at all, or knowledge only of our own sensations. Even the solid world of matter fades into a dream. Groups of sensibilities that have somehow, in my imagination, transferred themselves to space, that I remember and anticipate, that have an order in their coming and going—these *are* my material world. I cannot accept of this result, nor of the

Digitized by Google

scheme that leads to it. To me it reads like a description of mind with the chief element of mind left out. We have no knowledge without sensations; they are the first terms to us of any relation; but it is in the perception of relations, of space, of time, of form and force, that knowledge directly rests; and as knowledge evolves, we come partly to understand how it was that we commenced by what seems in itself a delusion. The animated creature had but its own sensations to give it the first consciousness of itself, or the external world. But the forms which sensation takes, are immediately invested with other properties, by relations perceived between *them*, which alter their character, and convert them into independent realities.

III.

By insisting on the fundamental distinction between Sensibility or Feeling, and Judgment, or the element of cognition, I separate myself from the sensationalists, who, with Destutt de Tracy, arrive at the conclusion, "Penser c'est sentir;" how do I stand in reference to that opposite school of metaphysicians who are designated as intuitionists?

I cordially embrace the favourite doctrine of modern times, that of evolution. I believe there is an order in the appearing or becoming of all things, which order apparently enters into the very nature of the things themselves. But every new appearance, every new becoming, in this order is, in one sense, equally original. It could not be what it is out of its order, but its coming into that order is always a new fact. Most of us refer the whole order to the one Being who is

Digitized by Google

alone self-existent. Some prefer to rest in the observed order, not from a conviction that nothing else exists, but that human knowledge cannot penetrate beyond. To us evolution is but a name for the method of creation, and the nature of the created.

Well, when we apply our doctrine of evolution to the human consciousness, what is the meaning of such terms as primary and fundamental, to which so much honour is by some attached? Are we to suppose that the first intellectual forms or conceptions, such as issue in their order from vital or physical antecedents, are especially authoritative, or in any way especially excellent? In other departments of nature we are accustomed to say that the lower appears first as condition of the higher, the simpler as the condition of the more complex. It is the last development and not the first that should receive the highest honour; or rather it is that whole whose *harmonized development* is carried furthest that should be most honoured. It is that which will not combine with any harmonized whole that we reject as error. This, if not an infallible test of truth, will be found to be the actual test which every man of necessity applies.

It is nothing to me to be told that certain savages or uncultured men have not this or that idea or intellectual perception. When it has come, how does it enrich, how does it harmonize with the whole of the conscious life? This is the question to be asked. I am not concerned to build my faith on some primary intuition or judgment. Truth is a harmony of many judgments.

In this much debated question of our knowledge of

Digitized by Google

the external world, in this objective independent existence of matter, it is not to some primary instinct or intuition that I should appeal—not to the first, but to the last development of intelligence. It is possible that if you arrest us at a certain stage in the process a charge of delusion might be made out against the senses—especially against the sense of sight, for we are here certainly presented with appearances which claim to be outward realities, and which it required the science of optics so to connect with the veritable material world, that we are able to pronounce them to be *representatives* of real forms in space.

Let me be permitted briefly to indicate the steps by which I imagine (for we can only here imagine a past by the help of such laws of human development as we have been able to learn from facts still open to the memory), by which I presume our belief in the external world was formed. If my statement is correct it will, at the same time, relieve us from the perplexities of the Idealists, or all those who challenge us to prove that our knowledge of matter is essentially anything else than a knowledge of our own sensations.

That our sensations do range themselves to our consciousness in space—*outside each other* as it has been expressed—is a fact about which there can be no dispute, even if we accept the subtle hypothesis that originally they were known only as succeeding each other in time. But, indeed, I know not how that hypothesis can apply to that first localization of sensations to which I have to allude, that feeling or perceiving our sensations within the area of our own body; *there,* as a physiologist might suggest, where

Digitized by Google

the nerves of sensation really extend and ramify. Besides the sensations on the surface, the body fills with sensations from muscular movement, the flow of the blood, or other work of nutrition. I can descend to nothing earlier than some knowledge of our own body by sensations felt in different parts of the area of that body, contrasting body and limbs, and limb with limb.

It may be well to observe that when I here speak of localization of sensations, I do not refer to that act of thought which the mature man is so familiar with, who says of one sensation it is in his arm, and of another it is in his foot. He has already the image in his mind of arm and foot, and refers the sensations to these well-known limbs. Such localization as this is plainly a subsequent process. I speak of that localization by which the knowledge of limbs is formed, or rather initiated; so much knowledge as to render possible the conceptions of form and movement. I cannot but suppose that every animal whose heart beats, and whose limbs involuntarily stir, awakes to a consciousness of sensations felt *here* and *there*. It does not from this primary localization of sensation obtain the full knowledge of its limbs. What further knowledge it obtains enters with the knowledge of the external, or other body against which it presses.

The cognition of our limbs as sensitive and moving forms is followed, or accompanied, by another most important cognition, namely, that the motion of the body or limbs is impeded in certain directions, unimpeded in other directions. The contrast stands out between a

Digitized by Google

space that permits and a space that does not permit motion. The outstretched arms, the hand with its many fingers, these define the impediment in space, shape it, shape it into that resisting form we henceforth know as matter. The same process gives solidity and a more definite form to our own limbs. The little infant is seen hammering his own hand into the perfect tool it is to become, while he is making acquaintance with the objects on which he strikes.

All these proceedings are attended with vivid sensations, both in the muscles of the moving limbs and on their touched surface. These sensations combine from first to last with that cognition of the outer form in space we call material object. But that form is fundamentally a thought, not a sensation. Form, movement, resistance to movement, these are intellectual perceptions, what we have called Judgments. Resistance is a relation between a moving form and a portion of space that resists movement. That resisting space is shaped out to the consciousness by the continued movement round it and about it of the sensitive hand. But though the sensitive hand is necessary to the cognition, the cognition itself is not a sensation, but a relation between the hand as a moving object and the obstacle in space.

It is just here, I venture to say, that the analysis presented to us (amongst others) by Professor Bain and Mr. J. S. Mill is at fault. These writers speak constantly of the *sensation of resistance*, as if a muscular feeling, somehow or other associated with a space beyond the body, constituted the whole of what we call

Digitized by Google

solidity.[1] Now Resistance not only in popular, but in strictly scientific language, is a relation only to be got at through the prior cognitions of form and motion. It means resistance to motion. In itself it is a thought or perceived relation. The muscular sensations which accompany it, obtain from it the name of feeling of resistance. But this feeling *in itself* would be merely a sensation felt under the skin.

If an analyst persists in limiting our attention to sensations alone and ignores that perception of relation which constitutes first form, then motion, then resistance to motion, he may very easily represent our knowledge of matter as, in fact, nothing but the memory or anticipation of sensations. But his representation will always wear the air of a paradox. Men will not recognise in it an accurate account of their own cognitions.

But I must proceed another step or two. Not only does my body move towards these forms that resist its motion—that are known and defined by that resistance, as well as clothed in some garment of my own sensations, but these bodies so defined move towards my body, impinge on it, pleasure it or hurt it. *They* have a motion of their own. They have movement as well as resistance to movement, and they too, so moving, move other bodies against which they impinge. They have force.

Here, also, if I am arrested at a certain point, I might

[1] "That resistance is only another name for a sensation of our muscular frame, combined with one of touch, has been pointed out by many philosophers, and can scarcely any longer be questioned."—MR. J. S. MILL.

"Of matter as independent of our *feeling of resistance* we can have no conception."—PROFESSOR BAIN.

Digitized by Google

have a great difficulty in eliminating the idea of force, from sensations and desires of the animated creature. For aught I know, a child attributes to every moving body, especially if it strikes him, the impulse of desire by which he himself moves. But sooner or later a distinction is made between the animate and the inanimate. And now when inanimate forms not only strike on me, the sensitive, but strike on other inanimate forms and the result is movement, is a *resistance overcome;* the conception of force as extended through nature—force as prior to, and independent of, sensation—is formed. Our conception of matter may be said to be complete. Perhaps resistance which wore the appearance of inertia becomes itself considered as a force. Force and resistance are regarded as two antagonist forces, revealing each other.

Amongst the steps of this process I have not introduced the sense of vision, because blind people do obtain our notion of the solid form in space without the aid of vision, and because I should have to discuss certain theories of vision. The Berkleian theory has been discredited of late. I am inclined myself to believe that the sensations of light arrange themselves directly in space, in form—that the animal which has vision has not to think out external form by the contrast between this and that direction in space. The form is given and the hand strikes it, and so demonstrates its resistance, its substantiality. Some knowledge of *its own body* is necessary to vision, otherwise no *outer* form; but this vision in outer space does not require that the animal should from other organs have obtained the knowledge of *solid* form outside of its

Digitized by Google

body. The visionary form is probably in most animals the first introduction to the solid form.

Do I represent our knowledge of the external world as perfect? Is any man of reflection satisfied with it? These forms in space are defined by the forces they display. We cannot think of the forms but by these forces, nor can we think of the forces without aid of the forms. Yet the *form* cannot be itself the space-occupant, that which really possesses or exerts the force. Not satisfactory, you say. But the cognition of these forces as manifested in space remains to us, although this cognition of them may still point to some being or existence that escapes in itself from our apprehension.

When, therefore, the old perplexity is put before us, how think of a world independent of ourselves—that is, independent of our own senses? my answer is, that we can think of no other; that the material forms we ultimately cognise are revealed to us by relations which our senses have enabled us to perceive, but which are from their nature upheld, not by sensations, but by space-occupants, whatever they may be. If cognised at all, they must be cognised as independent of our senses. Merely to say that with my intellectual existence the world ceases to exist for me, would be a truism which no one would care to dispute, and which no one would care to utter. The philosophers I am alluding to say that matter, as known to us, is so completely the creation of our own senses, that it cannot be thought of except in connexion with them. They ceasing to exist, the material world as known to us must cease to exist—must be thought of as ceasing to

Digitized by Google

exist. This they sometimes call the true doctrine of the relativity of knowledge. Solidity is not a property of the form in space, it is a muscular feeling of my own. I entirely dissent from this interpretation of my consciousness, from this description of our knowledge. Solidity or resistance is a force, not a sensation. I think of it, in my mature state of intelligence, as existing in space—as existing before sensation—as a necessary condition of sensation, as something that from its nature cannot depend on my consciousness of it, but on which it is very possible my consciousness may depend.

To return to the Intuitionists. I was about to say that I should not follow the example of those who commence their treatises with an array of fundamental truths which they appear to consider as inseparable from a human mind. Certainly not, if these truths are of a moral or religious character. If our very definition of matter alters or clears itself as knowledge advances, is it likely that moral and religious truth should reveal itself with precision in the first stages of intelligence? A truth is none the less a truth because for many ages, and to many minds, it was utterly unknown, and a sentiment is not to be described as less pertaining to humanity, because it comes in as a sequence to some previous accretion of knowledge.

In our ethical controversies there exists and has long existed a school of philosophers who insist upon describing the conscience, such as they find it in themselves, as having entered full grown into the world. God, and obligation to obey Him by loving our fellow-creatures—they detect all this in their own conscience,

Digitized by Google

and forthwith they describe this conscience as an original intuition. This may save the trouble of argument or investigation, but it leads to a misinterpretation of the real nature of a state of mind which has been gradually evolved. It is on such a subject as this that we must look into the history of the human race to assist and correct our psychology.

We must bear in mind that in no way does "the oak lie in the acorn." The only oak is that which begins to exist then and there as it appears above the surface of the earth, and throws its leaves into the light of day. The seed was a condition of the tree, so too was earth, and air, and water, and the heat of the sun. Through many conditions, after many antecedents, this grand novelty of the oak tree made its appearance. In like manner, the only mind we know is just this consciousness that evolves in its order under many conditions. The knowing and the feeling, the knowledge and the sentiments of which this mind is composed, have their order of development, order depending on the Eternal Cause of all things, if we can speak of its depending on anything whatever; but there is no substance, mind, or brain, no acorn which in any way held this wondrous oak tree within itself. New branches spread, new truths, new sentiments—they come; and would you estimate their comparative value and importance, you must do this by understanding their place in the whole.

Amongst relations which start up as life progresses, is this very one of the contrast between truth and error. At first all cognitions are equally true; but anticipations come that are not realized, and memories

Digitized by Google

that are not confirmed, and imagination puts together, after some wild fashion of her own, the materials of experience. So then there are false cognitions, erroneous thoughts, as well as true. And it becomes one of the great interests of life to discriminate between them.

IV.

All our passions are thoughts on one side. The simplest desire enfolds some object of perception, or some anticipated action. You would not qualify our passions as pure feeling any more than you would describe them as pure thought. Separate the elements, and the passion ceases to exist. Fear is an anticipation of injury from some external object, or some voluntary agent. It is true that the injury we fear may be very vague, but these vague fears have entered through others not so vague. We run over all the evils we have known without resting definitely upon any one, or we fear something *worse* than anything hitherto known. When darkness brings its imaginary terrors we have the horrible suspicion that some creature or person is present, whom we cannot see, and who may suddenly make his presence known by seizing on us, perhaps to torture us. A quite strange object, seen for the first time, may excite fear, but this is because experience has taught us that there are hostile as well as friendly creatures, and we know not amongst which to class this new-comer. Uncertainty must take the shape either of a fear or a hope.

Merely to think of an object that has given us pleasure, is the source of a new emotion. It may be a

Digitized by Google

desire or a regret; merely to think of a man who has injured us may be the source of a most vivid emotion of hatred or revenge. Merely to think of one who has given us pleasure is to love him. It is the first step into love, happily not the last. Then comes the love of *premeditated* kindness to another.

Pain and pleasure might exist without hatred and love. Hatred and love could hardly exist without pain and pleasure. Such is the order of their becoming. And by processes of evolution we cannot stop to trace, wider and more complex cognitions bring with them what we denominate more refined and noble sentiments. Always the sentiment is thought on one side, feeling on the other.

Is philanthropy—the question may perhaps have been asked—a feeling or a thought? It is plainly both. But then the elements of thought and feeling may be very differently proportioned. A man may be intellectually occupied with schemes for the amelioration of human society, yet not have sufficient emotion to lead him into any practical measures for that amelioration. He will not be without some emotion however, for to think of the happiness of others as a desirable object, is in some measure to desire it. Another man may have reasoned upon his benevolent schemes hastily or feebly, and yet be carried by his feelings into vigorous and pertinacious action.

No subject appears to me more interesting than the evolution of thought and feeling displayed in what we generally call sentiments, æsthetic or moral. But I must hasten to the completion of my psychological sketch; and two subjects remain—not to be discussed,

Digitized by Google

for that is impossible, but to be defined and described —the will and the personality.

I have said that mind or consciousness is always a knowing and a feeling, always these in their infinite diversity, and nothing else than these. What account, then, do I give of the will? Is not the threefold division—knowing, feeling, willing—that which is generally adopted by psychologists?

Let us limit ourselves at first to will as one with voluntary motion. As mere mental resolution, the questions that occur are of a different kind. A mere mental resolve to perform a certain action at a future time can be nothing but thought and desire, some combination of our old familiar elements of judgment and feeling.

That I have power to move I hold certain, but that power or force does not belong to man simply as conscious man. Sensation is not force, cognition is not force. There is some space-occupant that moves in obedience to sensation, but the force of movement must live in it. I learn that there is this force in my vital frame; I depend upon it, I trust it, I have the utmost confidence that it will not desert me; but in my consciousness it is an object of knowledge.

That which belongs to the consciousness, which lives only in it, is the *sentiment of power—the feeling* of joy in triumph which follows the knowledge of this force —the knowledge that *I can* what *I wish*, that desire accomplishes itself.

There is nothing that I sooner know, nothing that is more pertinaciously present to me throughout life, than this power of motion. But what does the power

Digitized by Google

mean? It means that if I wish to move I move. A veritable power; an accomplishment of my wish. *How* that wish is accomplished I never know—except that some force that runs through nature is here linked to my desires. I know there is this connexion, and have the *sentiment* of power due to such knowledge. This is all I can detect. I notice that between my desire and the movement intervene muscular sensations; these become to me the signs of movement and of force, but they themselves are neither movement nor force. There is no simple psychical element that in the case of voluntary motion can be picked out and called *will.*

To act, to move, is surely something different from to know I move. Certainly it is. The movement of any body is something different from my knowledge that it moves. But that movement can enter into my consciousness only as knowledge. I am not bound to explain voluntary motion on the theory of those who give me no movement at all, no objective reality in space—give me nothing but sensations or ideas. I have the cognition of my own limbs, and I know that they move in obedience to my desires.

Mr. Bain, at the commencement of his treatise on the "Intellect," briefly mentions and dismisses the twofold division here adopted; and insists, somewhat energetically, on the threefold division of knowing, feeling, and willing. But the reader of Mr. Bain's works soon becomes aware that in his analysis the radical element, to be called will, is reduced to a peculiar sensation which he somewhere suggests may be due to the motor nerves, in a more direct manner than physiologists generally teach. That there is this

Digitized by Google

peculiar sensation no one will think of disputing, and that it has most important relations in this matter of willing; but if this peculiar *sensation* is the radical element left in the crucible, what ground can there be for making of *it* a separate class?

Many writers are accustomed to speak of a *sense of effort*, as if there were some sensation which at once, and by itself, gave us knowledge of force, and of what they would call the mind's force. I must repeat here the same observations I made on the *sense of resistance*, the same muscular sensation, with a slightly different name. We call it *sense of resistance* when the obstacle is prominent in our mind; *sense of effort*, when the impelled or pressed limb is the prominent perception.

The muscular sensation we call sense of effort, would never have obtained this name, if certain cognitions had not accompanied it—cognitions of our moving limbs, of limbs pressed against an obstacle, of *the resistance overcome.* We must travel to this last. Mere pressure on an obstacle would be an increased sensation of touch. The resistance overcome reveals the force, and gives to pressure its true character. Effort is a correlate of resistance. We have cognitions of form, movement, resistance to movement, and resistance overcome. By being accompanied with these cognitions our muscular sensations obtain such names as sense of resistance, sense of effort, or of force. A sensation in itself cannot be the force we are seeking.

It being understood that our knowledge is of realities in space, forms, movements, forces, bodies inanimate and animate, what is there in will (psychically considered) but a knowledge of our bodies as moving under such

Digitized by Google

and such conditions, our confidence in such laws of movement, and the sentiment of power that arises from desire accomplished?

And now a final word on the perplexing problem of personality.

Amongst the theories propounded on the nature or origin of the *ego*, the one most favoured, I believe, by metaphysicians is that which represents the ego and non-ego as rising together in every cognition. There is no thought, say some, without this *object* and *subject.* I have been, at times, disposed to adopt this theory, but further consideration has compelled me to dissent from it.

Attending as closely as I can to what passes in a cognition of the external world, all that I find, in the *immediate* act or state of knowledge, is a perception of those relations, as of time and space, which constitute it to *be* an object of knowledge. This other relation between myself and the object, between percipient and perceived, is, in fact, another cognition, to which I may pass immediately afterwards, but which was no essential part of the precedent cognition. It is another knowledge, and has its own history, its own course of evolution. Self, or the constant thinker, is *there* in every thought: such is our conviction; but I can only recognise it when in its turn it becomes an object of thought. What the metaphysicians call *subject* seems to me only the rapid, habitual, irrepressible recurrence of this object of thought. I do not think myself in every act of thought, though the self may be ever there.

Many high authorities represent the perception of an object in space as necessarily involving the *ego* and the

Digitized by Google

non-ego, as if such object must necessarily be outside the mind. But surely the external object means external to my body. It requires two bodies, two positions in space, to give externality, to give space itself to the consciousness. My body and another body are here the terms of the relation. The cognition of externality is the perception of the relation between them. The cognition itself has no place. Consciousness cannot be thought of in a place, except by being connected with something that has been so cognised. The external object is outside *me*, because I have located this *me* in my body.

How grows up this *self*, this object of thought which I learn to regard as the percipient, the thinker, the receiver of all impressions, the agent in all acts? I am afraid that my account will be only thought too commonplace, too homely.

This body of mine not only fills its place, and stands opposed in turns to a multitude of other bodies, but it is the seat of marvellous organs of sensation, and of this marvellous power to move in obedience to sensation. It is the eye that sees, the ear that hears, the hand that touches, that moves and moves other things. Innumerable are the forms seen, the sounds heard, but the same eyes, the same ears, are ever present; the same hands touch everything; the same vital, mobile frame is ready at all times to respond to our desires. This body, so endowed, I must need carry with me through all my memories and all my anticipations: it is my earliest *ego*, and the ground or condition for any more subtle ego that is afterwards devised.

For although to our first apprehensions it is the eye

Digitized by Google

that sees and the ear that hears, and the hand that moves, we come to recognise our consciousness, as embracing in its own unity whatever the eye and the ear and the hand can contribute. What is this which combines all that the senses give, and contributes thoughts of its own? I see, and I remember while I see. What is it that both thinks and feels? Whatever it may be, I place it there amongst the senses. It has no form or substance that I can seize upon; but I can give it a place; I can lodge it in the body. Somewhere behind the eye and the ear is that which remembers what was seen and heard. Men soon become familiar with forms of matter impalpable or invisible; they feel the wind they do not see; they see reflections in the water they do not touch. Something both invisible and impalpable within the body—this shall be that which thinks.

The more mature and cultivated man meditating on the unity of consciousness (for the consciousness is always that one which embraces the many) carries his speculations still further. His thinking substance shall be one and *indivisible.* Here perhaps he rests. It is no disparagement to his conception of a soul or spirit within the body, that it could not have been reached but through a previous knowledge of the body itself. Have I not said that it is the last, and not the first, that is most honourable and of necessity the most authoritative?

Whatever is the final conception we attain (some mingled conception to the last, I presume, of body and soul), whatever is the object of thought we call self, that object accompanies every memory and every anticipation. It is that which has felt and acted, which will

Digitized by Google

feel, enjoy, suffer, and act in the future; it is this we surround, as a nucleus, with habits and acquirements, and ever recurring wants or passions. No reflection is without it. The thought just passed is instantly recognised as having been the thought of this self. But it is always as an object that it occurs; the relation of object and subject is, in reality, the relation between two objects of thought.

I do not say that thought exists without a thinker; I merely say that the thinker does not think himself in every thought. Under very strong passion, or in earnest meditation upon some impersonal topic, we are aware that there has passed an interval without any reference to self.

But, in general, the present consciousness is made up of memories and anticipations, and in all these self enters. To remember a sensation as mine is to attribute it to this body of mine. It is because the present consciousness is almost always some combination of our past or of our expected future, that this *self* is so rarely absent from us.

For this reason I said in the commencement that personality ultimately depends on the fact, that the present consciousness embraces in itself the past, the future. The two *selfs* of past and future must need be identical, for our anticipations are our memories thrown before us.

The actual present consciousness, if it could possibly be limited to some one object, as the perception of relations in space, would have no *self* in it. It would consist of just that perception of relation.

To no such consciousness can we travel back. In

Digitized by Google

the first place, all sensations, actions, cognitions, have been associated with this body, or this soul-in-body; and, in the next place, our present consciousness almost invariably consists of the past and future of *this self*. And the very present will, the instant it has passed, be known as having belonged to the same self.

Consciousness travels on, one ever-present, with its past and future self. And as it travels on it moulds and magnifies this self—whose real home is always in the past or future.

Our poet Tennyson has not scrupled to represent the personality as a knowledge that has had its course of growth or development; and, to judge by the frequency with which his lines have been quoted, they must have harmonized with some general conviction—

> "The baby new to earth and sky,
> What time his tender palm is prest
> Against the circle of the breast,
> Has never thought 'that this is I.'
>
> But as he grows he gathers much,
> And learns the use of 'I' and 'me,'
> And finds I am not what I see,
> And other than the things I touch:
>
> So rounds he to a separate mind."

The nature of our knowledge of the external world, the will, and personality, are three topics intimately connected. I regard our knowledge of the external world as based on the perception of relations which from their nature can be supported only by space-occupants. I believe in the external world; therefore I can believe that the actual relations of this world

Digitized by Google

become (I know not how) in the sensitive organism, *perceptions* of these relations. And if I believe that an animated body, by such perceptions, has become cognisant of itself and of its surroundings, must not I see here the first *personality?* This animated creature, standing out in contrast to all the rest of the world, moving in obedience to all desires, *has will* because *there is* this combination of desires and movements; and has the sentiment of power because *it knows* this connexion of desire and movement.

Man is not simply a conscious being, he is a combination of physical and psychical properties, or, as we familiarly say, he is body and soul. To know is pre-eminently the psychical property, and to know the body, its movements and laws of movements, and how they are connected with feeling or desires, becomes a consciousness of power. If we seek *anywhere* for an individuality that can march forth alone in the universe, we shall seek in vain. We move, and live, and have our conscious being as parts of some great whole —of Divine authorship as we think. There are, so far as we can penetrate, innumerable space-occupants which define themselves to us by their relation to each other; they form bodies, vital bodies, these last become conscious of themselves and their surroundings. As psychologists, we must begin by shutting ourselves up in our consciousness; but having justified to ourselves our knowledge of the world in space, we end by, in part, explaining our consciousness by that world in space. Mind is a creation upon a creation; the mind of man, the last creation, still travelling on, as we believe, to its completeness or to further development.

Digitized by Google

PART II.

SOME FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE WILL.

Consciousness, I endeavoured to show, is, from its first to its last stage of development, a combination of knowing and feeling. The two elements, sensation and judgment (apprehension of relations), are inextricably blended in our simplest perceptions; sensations arising to us in the relations of space and time. The unit of consciousness, if this expression is permissible, is a combination of sensations and a judgment, or apprehension of relations. I say if this expression is permissible, because I have always felt the difficulty there is in speaking of one definite *state* of consciousness, seeing that the consciousness itself is an arena of perpetual change and flux, and that what we should call the movement of thought appears necessary to thought itself. When, in the further evolution of mind, cognition seems to separate itself most distinctly from feeling, as in the labours of the mathematician or man of science, the cognitions with which their thinking is concerned were originally due in part to sensations; and a desire of some kind, curiosity if no other, presides over all that movement of thought which we here call reasoning or acquisition of knowledge. A percep-

Digitized by Google

tion, in becoming a memory, if it is stripped of its sensational character, assumes an emotional character. To think of a past pleasure or pain becomes a present passion. In short, look into the consciousness at any moment you will, you find an inextricable complication of the intellectual and the emotional, of passions that grow out of cognitions, of cognitions again that have passions and other feelings for the objects of discrimination and comparison. All our moral truths have pain and pleasure, love and hate, for the very terms of the cognitions they deal with.

But consciousness is not the whole man. He consists of body, as well as mind, or in a union of physical and psychical properties. The connexion between these properties, in one remarkable instance, gives us voluntary motion, gives us will. Will, as voluntary motion, is plainly neither exclusively a physical nor psychical property, but a result of their combination. Movement and the force by which one body moves or breaks up another body, are physical properties, thought and feeling are psychical properties; the connexion between the two constitutes the will, as matter of fact; the *knowledge* of such connexion gives us our sentiment of power, our self-confidence, our belief that to a certain extent we have a command over the future. It converts thought into a purpose, anticipation into a resolve.

Two great facts encounter us on the threshold of life,—the action of the external world on our sensitive bodies, and the reaction of those sensitive bodies on surrounding objects. These two great facts, or speaking from a psychological point of view, these two cog-

Digitized by Google

nitions, enter together into the consciousness. I know my own body and its movements, at the same time that I know the external object and its movement, or its resistance to movement. The two cognitions are needful to each other. I know furthermore that the movements of my limbs follow, to a certain extent, my desires. I know this as a matter of experience, and have learned to trust to it as the invariable order. I know nothing more; or if physiology and metaphysical reasoning have given me any insight into the nature of this connexion between desire and movement, it is plain that I am here dealing with some additional cognitions. In psychology, the will is nothing else than a special cognition accompanied by its special class of sensations and emotions.

As to the theories we form of the nature of mind and matter, or of the connexion between them, I repeat that we are plainly here on the high road of reasoning or conjecture. To some, the transition from a state of consciousness to bodily movement seems best represented by supposing that the same substance puts forth in succession these two different modes of activity. Others prefer to assign these two modes of activity to different substances, and they represent the one of these substances stimulating and determining the movements of the other. We hear some maintain that all force is essentially will, that is, it emanates from mind, from the mind of Deity, matter being only the passive recipient of such forces. This last theory claims our respect; all these theories claim our examination; but they are evidently at present in the state of conjecture. What we really know, what every

Digitized by Google

man, woman, and child born into the world really knows, is that desire is followed by movement.

Here some reader may object—But we do not say my desire moves my arm, or desire moves the arm; we say I desire, and I move. Does not the *I move* remit the power at once to the ego, whatever the ego may be? To me it seems that the *I move* is equivalent to *this man moves;* and this man is just the union of the several properties, physical and psychical, that go to the formation of this whole. Both the desire and the movement belong to the man, but the man is nothing but the combination of desire and movement and other properties. His heart, his limbs, his lungs *belong* to the man; that is, they are parts of the whole we call a man. In no other sense do they *belong* to him. This mode of speaking and thinking follows us everywhere, for everywhere we encounter individualities which are but combinations of parts forming a new or specific whole. We say of a dog that *it has* a head, *has* four legs. Abstract the head, or the legs, where is the dog? The dog is a certain whole of many parts and properties, and each one is in its turn referred to that whole. In the *I think, I desire, I move* of human speech there is a reference of each of these properties to that whole which constitutes the conception of man, or to so much of that whole as is necessary to give a meaning to the expression *I*, or *this man.* And when we say *I will,* this is a reference to the same whole of that connexion between the properties of desire or movement which enters so conspicuously into the composition or individuality of man.

I observed in my last paper that the term Will was

Digitized by Google

often applied exclusively to the purpose itself, to the thought or consciousness that precedes motion, and I added that this application to the mental resolve had given rise to a class of questions I could not then stay to examine. I alluded especially to the question we ask about the will, whether it is free or not? If I may venture to trespass so far on the patience of the readers of the *Contemporary*, I would continue somewhat further my discussion of the will, and carry the discussion into this old debate.

I.

It is not difficult of explanation how the term Will comes to be used as synonymous with Purpose; how it happens that we speak indifferently of a man of indomitable resolve, or indomitable will. The purpose of the man is the important element in every human action. It is to this our blame or praise attaches. The actual movement of body or limb that follows the resolution may often be of the most trivial description, or, through the wonderful education which resides in habit, it may be performed, as we are accustomed to say, almost automatically. If the child at first moves for the very pleasure of movement, from the desire to reproduce the sensations of touch and muscular contraction (the memory and anticipation of such muscular sensations acting, it is supposed, as a repetition of the original stimulus that passed from the nerves of sense to the nerves of motion), it very soon has ulterior objects for its various movements. It clutches at some object of desire, and so well has habit done its office, that the eye seems to direct the hand without a thought

Digitized by Google

being bestowed on the muscle, or on the individual movements of the arm and the fingers. And again, the motives that induce either the child or the man to clutch at an object may be very different. The outward action may be the same where the purposes are in flagrant contrast. A child grasps the neck of the decanter to help itself to some tempting liquid, the nurse grasps the same decanter to prevent the child from drinking what would be deleterious to it. The meaning and nature of the action comes to depend on the thought behind it. A bridge has been carefully, laboriously, slowly built by the subtle power of habit, between the consciousness of the man and the physical world, and now what processions are marshalled on the other side of the bridge! The bridge itself is scarcely considered.

A school-boy moves a pen over a copy-book and produces his array of letters, good or bad. With very much the same action of his hand, an emperor may abdicate his throne. Vastly different actions, and the same trivial, customary movement. Very often the movement that follows a long deliberation or important resolve, has no peculiar relation to the thought or purpose. To a mere spectator, it would be quite insignificant. To descend from our imperial altitude—and to descend gently—let us suppose a member of parliament receiving an offer to join the ministry, to take office as we say, how gravely he might deliberate, with what emotion he might resolve! Yet the resolution made, what does he *do?* Perhaps he rises gently from his seat, touches a bell, and despatches a message, which has no apparent connexion with the acceptance

Digitized by Google

or refusal of office. The resolution is all, the ability to act on it is implied, and, therefore, it takes to itself the name of will, which primarily embraced not only the purpose but the external act itself.

More especially to him who *has* the purpose is the ability to act in uniformity with it implied. Purpose includes some anticipated action. It includes the confidence that this bridge lies open between thought and movement. No wonder the man says *I will* who as yet only *anticipates* action.

But there is another important fact to be taken notice of. A purpose not only goes forth into action; it influences our trains of thought. We think under the influence of a purpose. Purposes once formed, all our thinking, unless it be some idle reverie, is controlled and prompted by them. We are not able here to anticipate the very thought, as we can anticipate the very movement which is next *to be*, but the purpose rouses the mental activity, and keeps it circulating round a given centre. The mechanical inventor, though he may be walking abroad in the fields, where not a wheel or a cog can anywhere be seen, is kept revolving in his mind all manner of combinations of wheelwork by his predominant purpose. Whatever may be our end in view, we are casting about for means for its accomplishment. For this reason it is said that attention is voluntary. We are looking or thinking energetically for some purpose, if it be only to know what manner of thing lies before us, and in what respects it differs from other things of similar kind.

Nor is this thinking for a purpose without its sentiment of power, for although the thinker cannot antici-

Digitized by Google

pate the very thought, as he can anticipate the very movement, that is next to take its place in the series of events, he has learnt that there is an influence of desire upon thought, he knows that his *wishing*, here also, will be effective, and will, in some less direct way, lead to the end he has in view. He tells you that he has the power to concentrate his energies upon his subject, and is not without some degree of confidence in the result. The thinker has his sense of power as well as the acrobat, though he cannot tell you so precisely what will be done.

Whether we give the name of will to this control which desire or purpose has over the current of thought, or prefer to describe this control as one amongst the laws of thought, laws that regulate the sequence and permanence of our ideas,—in either case the fact remains that we do marshal our thoughts under the sway of any predominant purpose. This is one sense of self-determination, as when we say that a man has the power of determining his own character.

II.

When science began to teach that all the forces or activities that surround us in space are determined, as to their moment of display, by relations to other forces or activities; that nothing moves alone; nothing originates its own movement or arrests its own movement; that everything acts in a pre-ordained order; nay, that whatever we call thing or individual, is some gathering together of pre-existent forms and activities, and acts in its individuality only in ordered relation to other individuals—men were prompted to ask, what then of

Digitized by Google

human thoughts and feelings which constitute the consciousness of man? Does the same order prevail here? Do these also come into existence, appear and disappear, according to some established law? And is this individuality which I call myself made up of divers elements, and does it act and live, as such individuality, by strictly ordained relations with the surrounding world of material forms and forces? Look abroad: the river, which lies and flows upon the earth, would not *be* a river without its channel; the earth is upheld by the sun; the smallest atom consists of parts and of divers forces, and has its movements determined by other atoms. As for living things, the plant is not only rooted in the soil, but grows out of air, and water, and heat, and light, and depends on a perpetual interchange of its very substance with the surrounding world. For the animal, does it not feed upon the vegetable, or on some other animal? How self-contained it seems as it darts hither and thither, runs or flies, seizing upon its prey! Yet the creature does not live an instant but by the order or harmony of that greater whole of which it is a part. Is man an individuality of this description? Distinguished as he is from all other creatures, and the last appearance in this region of space, is he not also a part of this wondrous whole? And though we assign to him—to each individual man—the indivisible soul we are all in imagination so familiar with, is not this new entity itself reacted on by the material instruments it is compelled to employ? These nerves, this brain, are its slaves, and its tyrants also. They receive impressions or modifications from the very work they are engaged in, they grow this way

Digitized by Google

or that by their very activity (growth which we call habit), and will at length perform work only of one kind. So the past comes to determine the present. In this, or some other way, man finds out that there is within his own little kingdom of mind, or self, an evolution, in which what *has been* determines what *will be;* determines it to us, to our apprehension, who see only the growth, and cannot dive down to the grower, whether of the plant or the mind.

If this be so, the startling reflection occurs, What becomes of our moral responsibility? Do we not punish this or that scoundrel in the firm faith that it depended on himself, at every moment of his life, whether he would be a scoundrel or not? How can I continue to punish him, or to punish him with the same sense of justice, if I am to believe that he grew into a scoundrel by the laws of nature—laws somewhat more complicate, but of the same kind that grow a tiger or a domestic dog? And, moreover, if I myself am the person punished, in what spirit am I to receive my punishment? Good for the whole, you say. A necessity is imposed on society to punish, and it is a necessity for me to submit. Perhaps I may profit by it. But what of this sentiment of remorse—of self-reproof? If crime was a misfortune or a misery in some other man, it was but a misfortune and a misery in me.

What contribution have I to make towards a solution of this old difficulty?

I would observe that this teaching of science, at some time or other, came in as a new doctrine, that our passions and sentiments had been adjusted without it, that it is not likely that it should be received and not

Digitized by Google

work some change in preconceived ideas of justice or moral responsibility; but that it is very possible, when the whole truth stands out clear before us, that the modifications made on our sense of justice may be far from pernicious.

The universality of law appeared as a new doctrine. Those who claimed for the human mind an exemption from the sway of law, were also, to a certain extent, teaching a new doctrine. It was not, therefore, on this position, "that man's mind or man's will is free, while the rest of nature is under the bondage of law," that moral responsibility was founded. Such an intellectual position could only be taken up after the teaching of science. But what occurred was this: men looked at the individual before them, saw him capable of self-movement, of self-determination, and felt towards him as if he were the veritable ultimate source of whatever injury or benefit came from the man. They carried their thoughts no further. Reign of law, or exemption from this reign, had not been heard of. Neither, when they contemplated themselves, did they ask whence their desires or purposes; but, conscious of acting from these, rested in the thought that they were the origin of their own deeds; as in some sense they certainly are. With the teaching of science the individual, while retaining his individuality, is shown to be more and more distinctly a part of a greater whole. The individual man is not only part of that entirety we call the world; he is also part of another we call society. The recognition of these truths does and must modify the sentiment of justice that had grown up before their advent; and I add that such modification, so far from

Digitized by Google

being a cause of alarm or regret, is one that takes its place in the order of human progress.

III.

The sentiment of moral responsibility is safe enough whatever betides. Let us look at the facts out of which it springs.

Man is, all his life, from infancy upwards, surrounded by other human beings whose wants and desires conflict or harmonize with his own. He is never free from this environment. He is prompted or controlled at every turn. Just as we move, and attain our power of resistance from the pressure and impact of foreign bodies, so do we love and hate and attain our sense of freedom or self-assertion from the sympathy, control, and resistance of other human beings. The pressure and stimulant of this social medium is as necessary to the growth of passion and intelligence as the pressure and stimulant of the external world was to animal life itself. It is no exaggeration to compare the two.

The child is, from the hour of its birth, under the control and superintendence of others. Without such superintendence it could not live. But it no sooner begins to move by impulses and desires of its own than it manifests an opposition to the control. The little rebel, who has found that it can move as it desires, refuses to move in any other way; and here, let me observe, is the very origin of our sentiment of freedom. I move as I desire, is power; I move as I desire in opposition to the command or control of another, is freedom as well as power. That sentiment of freedom we have to act upon in relation to our fellow-creatures

Digitized by Google

has a social origin. It did not spring from any theory about the freedom of the will. It sprang from resistance to control.

Submission was good, but rebellion was better. The child learnt self-assertion. Then afterwards, as intelligence and affection are developed, it learns to forego its self-assertion. A mere helpless submission becomes a voluntary obedience. It chooses obedience. The moral sentiment is created.

Strange! Even most intelligent men, like M. Jouffroy and others, in arguing the question of the free will, plant themselves on this fact of Choice, and hence contend for their favourite doctrine. Indisputably we choose. But what is choice? It is manifestly a very conspicuous instance of that combination of passion and reason, of the intellectual and emotional elements, which we say characterizes the consciousness throughout. In what the moralist calls choice the two elements of judgment and passion are inseparably combined. There is comparison, contrast, consequences inferred, and there is that prevailing feeling, whatever it may be, which is the essence of a *preference.* There is no *will* to preside over this choice, but this choice becomes itself will by its going forth into action. It is the passion and judgment of the man that together make his choice. His energy lies in his passion.

My position as a psychologist is clear. If we are speaking of action, will is the relation between thought and feeling, between a state of consciousness and some movement. To describe this relation as being *free* is unintelligible language. By a license of speech we give the name will to the purpose alone. The purpose

Digitized by Google

alone, before it is connected with action, is a certain combination of thought and feeling. Then, to say that such purpose is *free*, is simply to assert that thought and feeling, that the whole mind of man is free, that is, not included in the general laws of the universe. Such assertion may be made; but it is a far wider, and very different assertion, than that which the advocate of free will is understood to make.

I was observing that, whether we make such assertion or not, moral responsibility must equally remain. Man is not a solitary being; he grows up, pressed on all sides by fellow-creatures. He loves and hates, and has to rejoice or suffer under the love and hatred of others. This coercion of the society on the individual is inevitable. It is exercised in different manners at different times. The common purposes of mankind vary. Many circumstances arise, modifying this coercion of society; as, for instance, the division of the community into several classes, whose interests, or common purposes, are not identical. Nor are great philosophical truths or doctrines without their influence. They may modify the love or hate we entertain to each other. They may enlighten us on what should be the common purposes of society. Where there is a common purpose, energetic and almost unanimous, this coercion is at its height. But need I say that no society could exist, not the poorest, scantiest hive of human beings, without this control of all on each, and the sentiment of moral responsibility which is the result of it?

IV.

Presuming we have arrived at the conclusion that mind and matter, psychical as well as physical qualities,

Digitized by Google

are all parts of one stupendous scheme, parts of that harmonious whole we ascribe to the Infinite Power, which again manifests itself to us *in* that whole—presuming that some such philosophical doctrine were generally accepted, what would be its influence on our moral sentiments?

I can well understand that a man with very vague notions about desert and punishment might, on first becoming acquainted with such a philosophy, be disposed to extract from it an excuse for self-indulgence. He has offended some one, who threatens punishment, and he pleads the necessity of the case, that "he could not help it"—that, in short, his passions were too strong to be controlled. Some such colloquy as the following might take place:—

"But you *could* help it," the offended man might retort. "You had the two courses of conduct placed before you, and you chose *this*."

"Very true; I chose. But then, as you know, I had certain habits and tastes, and but a certain amount of knowledge. I could not choose otherwise."

"It was your duty not to let such habits and tastes, as you call them, become predominant. It is the first purpose of every intelligent man to form his own character; you had the power to watch over yourself, and to check your self-indulgences."

"True again; but you know as well as I do that I could not exercise a supervision over my own habits and tastes, with a view to the formation of my own character, unless I had this very purpose of forming a character. My power here is simply an acting or thinking under the influence of such a purpose. Now

Digitized by Google

no such purpose has ever grown up in me, or it has been a plant of an extremely feeble description. I have been chiefly occupied with such chance pleasures—they have been few enough—that came within my reach. You, I believe, have had this solemn purpose of forming a character; I congratulate you upon it; in me it has not been evolved."

Here the offended man will probably break off the colloquy:—"All I can say is this," he will ultimately reply, "that if you do it again I will so punish you that you will choose better for the future."

And if this is an earnest threat it will very likely be effectual, and lead to some better choice on the next occasion. It may also lead our tiro in philosophy to some reflection on the nature of punishment. Based on the past deed, its operation is really prospective. It stands between the past and the future. It is, in short, an instrument of education; a coarse instrument, but indispensable.

Moreover, even the offended man, when his anger has subsided, may gather something from such a colloquy. He, too, will be led to reflect on the nature of vice and its punishment. He knows that in some extreme cases society can think only of self-defence. It either exterminates the criminal or incarcerates him, just as we are compelled to shoot a tiger or shut it in a cage. But these cases excepted, he too will note that punishment is in its nature a mode of education, and a mode not to be resorted to while there are other blander or more effectual modes within reach.

What gain could it be to any individual to relieve him from punishment on the plea that passion and habit were too strong for him, and that he "could not help

Digitized by Google

it"? The more need that society should come to his aid and help him "to help it." What are any of us without the control of society?

Look into the village school. Here is an idle boy who lounges, and sulks, and slumbers over his book. In fact he is fat, and lethargic in his temperament. A physiologist will suggest good reasons for his indolence. He cannot help it. Left to himself he cannot. But the schoolmaster comes to his assistance, applies reproof, shames him in the eyes of his fellow-pupils; if need be applies the cane. The boy struggles through his task. Thus stimulated he becomes intelligent of something beyond marbles and peg-top. Would it have been kindness, would it have been well, for him or the community, if the plea "he could not help it" had been listened to, and the lethargic temperament left in undisputed predominance? It was predominant, and for that reason, doubtless much to his regret, the schoolmaster was compelled to administer the sharp stimulant of the cane.

The notions afloat in the public mind about punishment or criminal justice may receive some modification from our philosophy, and with considerable advantage. As it is the purpose or intention which is the great element in human action, it is the purpose or intention we mainly look for when we ask the question, whether a man deserves punishment or not. And since we have not been accustomed to proceed further in our inquiries, but have rested at this purpose, we have naturally rested in *this idea of desert.* We leave off with this feeling, that the man deserves the punishment, as he really designed the act and the evil consequences that

Digitized by Google

followed from it. Apart from the consideration of the deterring or educational effect of the punishment, the mind receives a satisfaction from this feeling, that it was *deserved.* It would not shock us to carry out the punishment irrespective of any good results to ensue from the punishment itself. But if we push our inquiries into the origin of this purpose that we punish, we may often find more room for compassion than for anger. We find neglected education, unpropitious circumstances, an inordinate appetite for pleasure, or a pitiful instability, at the root of all. We become more and more awake to the importance of early education, and speculate on the kind of education that might compete with these deleterious influences. But on this account do we forego the present punishment? No; but we administer it for such good results as we hope may flow from it. We make the discovery that a perfect punishment regards the past purpose—punishes *it*—but punishes in order to aid the formation of better purposes for the future. A merely retributive punishment is discarded; it must be also prospective in its character. A perfect punishment, that which is really *deserved*, is that which is inflicted on what is truly a human action, a purposed deed, and inflicted with the design of preventing such purpose for the future. A just punishment stands between the past and the future —the past is *judged;* the character of the act is discriminated, and it is further *punished* for the improvement of the criminal himself, if possible; but, at all events, for the prevention of the recurrence of such acts.

Public punishments, such as are administered by the laws, are administered by the whole society, by the

Digitized by Google

whole community, for its own interest and self-preservation. I have heard it asked, Why should a man be punished *as an example for others*—why should he be sacrificed to the good of society? And thereupon I have heard the querist endeavour to satisfy himself by some eternal fitness between punishment and crime. The culprit *deserved*, and therefore he was punished. The culprit deserves no punishment at all, unless you can prove, first, that he committed the crime; and, in the second place, that the punishment of it is for the good of society. It is precisely this very element of the good of all that makes the punishment a righteous punishment, that makes it *deserved*, that makes it justice, and not mere revenge. The man punished is one of the *all*. Would he renounce this *solidarity?*

But under our philosophy it is said the criminal will not judge himself so severely as he was wont to do. Men will be apt to be self-indulgent. Remorse will die out. Here, I have to observe that the standard of moral perfection that men propose to themselves must depend on the existing development of intelligence and affection. It can depend on nothing else. Philosophy or science does nothing to check this development. As to this peculiar sentiment of remorse, some modification here may well be admitted. As in punishing a criminal we put ourselves between the past and the future, punish the deed done to secure a *better doing* for the future, so we must desire the criminal also to put himself between the past and the future, to reproach himself for the deed done, and at the same moment resolve on better life for the future. We have no desire that he should inflict misery on himself, that

Digitized by Google

leads to no good result. If it were possible for him to rest wholly in his remorse for the past, the sentiment would be of no avail. Penitence that leads to better life is the noblest of sentiments; but it is noble in proportion as the sad penitent directs his steps to wiser courses. A remorse that shuts a man up for self-torture does not commend itself to us. "You have done wrong; you know it and you feel it; go now and do right; show your sorrow in your better life." That is the language we expect to hear from the lips of intelligent men. Remorse that contemplates any other expiation than the better life for the future leads to superstitious practices. Again and again has society witnessed this spectacle: men and women have had remorse, have expiated their vices by some self-torture, some retributive punishment self-inflicted, and gone back into society ready to reproduce the same vices. There is no expiation for an old crime but a new virtue.

The sentiment of moral responsibility, or the moral sentiment, passes through many phases. At first it is plainly the fear of punishment attached to some voluntary or purposed action. Then the kind of punishment that is feared begins to change; we fear disgrace more than bodily pain. Afterwards the boy or youth undertakes to be himself a judge of others; sees himself less frequently in the place of culprit; delights to put himself in the judgment-seat. He thinks with the multitude, or with some class or body to which he belongs; he pronounces judgment in their name. Of course he has to commend the same chalice to his own lips that, in the name of such society, he has offered to

Digitized by Google

others. With maturer intellect he comes to understand how individuals grow each in his own environment; he becomes more tolerant of the criminal, less tolerant of the crime; he wants to attack this last in every way imaginable—stifle it, if possible, in its birth. Morality takes the shape of a great desire—desire of excellence in others and in himself—desire of a completed society to be obtained only by the co-operation of each member of it. For such is the nature of the human hive. It forms the individual, yet itself is only an assemblage of individuals, each leading his own intelligent and passionate existence. Add, too, that such desire is sustained by the knowledge that it is shared with other minds around him, who will esteem and love him in proportion as he possesses and acts upon it; sustained also by the knowledge that it is one with the laws of God.

Surely to believe that God has created a world which progresses in part through the progressive purposes of man, will not check the growth of such purposes.

V.

To resume. Will, in its primitive significance, is the relation between the psychical and physical properties of man. Movement and sensation are found blended together. We presume even in the brain, but we enter into a knowledge of this union only through the movement of the limbs; nor can we proceed further back, in our introspection, than the consciousness of our limbs moving at the call of sensation or desire. Endeavouring to trace the earlier stages of the growth of a definite case of will, we assume that at first the

Digitized by Google

infant would move from some sense of uneasiness, by a purely physiological connexion between that sense of uneasiness and a given movement; or that there is a direct connexion between our organs of perception and specific movements. Some experiences, founded on these physiological facts, must have preceded a definite desire to move, because such a desire implies the knowledge that movement follows our feelings and perceptions. It is an *emotional anticipation* of the movement that directly leads to it. Such emotional anticipation is itself only a combination of thought and feeling; the movement of the limb ensues; the combination of these two is a case of will.

If by any means a conviction is introduced into the mind that you *cannot* move, you will be unable to move voluntarily; because the anticipation of movement is an essential part of the process, and you are prevented from forming the anticipation. Thus a weak or idiotic person might be persuaded by another that he could not move his arm, and while under that persuasion a voluntary movement of the arm would be impossible. People under the mesmeric influence are said to be reduced to the requisite state of idiocy, and to be capable of receiving such a conviction. I do not speak to this fact myself; I merely observe that, if it be a fact, the explanation of it is at hand. In the mesmeric exhibitions that I have witnessed, the lads who were told that they could not rise from their seats, and were thereupon seen to writhe with unavailing effort, seemed to me to play their parts only too well. Mere immobility, which I presume would have been the effect of such genuine convictions, would have told nothing to

Digitized by Google

the spectators. So the lads grimaced and writhed. But if so much of the old accustomed conviction was left as to enable them to perform such contortions, one suspects they might have carried their movements a little further.

Let us take some complete and finished instance of voluntary motion—say a trained youth in his athletic exercises. He is *putting* the stone. He chooses his position, plants his feet firm upon the earth, and at such distance from each other as to give him the surest support; his back is arched, his chest expanded to afford fullest play to the muscles; he raises the stone in both hands. All these preliminary movements follow each other, or group themselves together, with scarce a thought bestowed upon them. There was a time when they were separate acquisitions, practised with conscious care, and with that degree of *pain* which attends upon new movements, and which enters largely into what is called sense of effort when new movements are being learnt. Now they fall as readily into their place as words in our ordinary language. They are, indeed, a kind of expression of himself, of his thought or purpose. He next fixes his eye on some imaginary spot to which he means to hurl his massive stone, and with one last passionate resolve that contracts every muscle in his frame, he dismisses it from his hands. What next ensues? He sees it flying through the air; he sees it half-bury itself in the earth, or scatter the soil where it falls. Such perception of form, and motion, and resistance overcome, such knowledge of the force which it has displayed, enter rapidly into his mind. That force of the stone is carried back

Digitized by Google

to the arm that propelled it, to the passion that nerved the arm!

But manifestly the passion, and the arm so nerved or stimulated, cannot be separated in the last conception he forms of *what moved the stone.* If in popular language he says it was his *will* that did it, he never, in the term will, separates the psychical property, the purpose, the passion, from the bodily force. He unites the two in this one convenient word, will.

We fall into a mistake if (speaking of voluntary motion) we take this convenient word will, and express by it some simple and peculiar psychical quality. It was framed to express a union of soul and body—the passion-contracted arm—but the psychical part of the business usurps the name to itself.

This it does very conspicuously when the movement, or series of movements that we perform, is not the main object of our contemplation, or when the action, whatever it may be, is still at a distance. Here popular language applies the term will to the resolution itself. And here it is evident that we can have nothing before us but the elements of thought and passion. Such terms as resolution and determination obtain a peculiar significance from the persistence of the thought and passion, and also from a feeling of opposition to whatever would resist or change it.

A contemplated action can be nothing but a thought. Often the action, so far as bodily movement is concerned, is of a very trivial character. It may be the utterance of a few words, a yes or a no. The resolution of the Christian martyr was to abstain from saying "I recant," or from throwing a few grains of incense

Digitized by Google

before the statue of an emperor. But such abstinence was followed by death. And friends and enemies implored and threatened in order to shake his resolution. But in vain. The martyr had one persistent purpose—to be faithful to his God. In the alternative placed before him he chose death.

What grand things have been said by poets and orators of this unshaken resolve! The man you cannot terrify, or flatter, or persuade, if he really have a great purpose, and power to accomplish it, is indeed one of the sublimest objects we can contemplate. The author of that noble poem, "The Spanish Gipsy," makes one of her characters say—

> "You may divide the universe with God,
> Keeping your will intact, and hold a world
> Where He is not supreme."

The stoic bent on doing what is good and right in defiance of the multitude, in defiance of his own self-regarding passions, attains, it is generally believed, the culminating point of human greatness. The greatness lies plainly in the purpose, the thought and passion of the man.

It is worth a remark that we sometimes expect that the resolution or choice of a virtuous man should be sudden, instantaneous, without a moment's hesitation. On other occasions we demand deliberation, and only approve the choice that follows on deliberation. If a man of honour is asked to tell a falsehood we should be disappointed if he did not at once reject the proposal; we expect that from the settled habit of his mind he will dismiss it at once, not without some feeling of scorn or anger that it should have been

Digitized by Google

made. But if some arduous and difficult enterprise is proposed to him we expect that he should deliberate before he returns an answer, because a wise man would carefully abstain from committing himself to what might be beyond his power to accomplish, because only light and feather-brained men would rush heedlessly on a difficult enterprise, because the resolution that is expected from him is one that must embrace all the probable dangers ahead. Time for reflection and deliberation there must be in such a case. No fitting resolution could else be formed.

But the choice that follows deliberation, and the choice that is sudden as lightning, are ultimately resolvable into the same elements of judgment and feeling, or, as we popularly express them, of reason and passion.

Do you wish to believe that this ever-varying and progressive movement of thought and feeling wells forth arbitrarily from your own mind? Are you reluctant to be the creature, ambitious to be creator? Do you wish to make these fine lines just quoted—beautiful as poetry—literally true, and have a universe of your own—

> "A world
> Where He is not supreme"?

It seems that all our lines of thought bring us from the natural to the supernatural, bring us to that Absolute Being and Power on which all nature rests. We move and live and have our being in God. We exist as part of His universe. This is what I presume is meant when we say that "in Him we live and move and have our being."

Digitized by Google

PART III.

SPECULATIVE THOUGHT.

PHILOSOPHY is one of those words which have traversed various epochs of mental development, and have come down to us with different significations not strictly compatible with each other. Such words defy definition. In the general use of them the old and the new significations are both preserved. For an old meaning does not instantly drop off when a new meaning comes in; both continue to live as long as possible together. In such cases there are, in fact, two or more *words to the mind*, while there is only one *to the ear* or the eye, and it depends on the context which word the writer is using. Any wisdom or knowledge above that of the multitude has passed by the name of Philosophy, whether it was moral, or religious, or scientific in its character. It was Philosophy that taught a man to rise above the tribulations of life. It was Philosophy that taught him to rise above life itself, above ordinary knowledge, into the fancied empyrean of the pure intellect. It was Philosophy that taught him to know the "causes of things;" meaning thereby what we now call the "order of phenomena." Originally it embraced science, and if we open a history of Philosophy, we

Digitized by Google

find ourselves conducted back to the hypothesis of Thales, that water was the all-forming, all-sustaining element. Even in times close at hand, it was customary to speak of the *philosophy* of Newton. At the present moment our most careful writers define the word by its contrast with science. The aims and the method of science being determined, a kind of thinking that lies outside of these shall be denominated Philosophy or Speculative Thought. Questions which science cannot resolve, or which at present it makes no attempt to resolve, are relegated to this category. Such are the questions we ask about the Absolute, or Unconditioned Existence, or the First Cause of all Things; such are the questions we ask about the nature of mind, regarded as a substance, and the whence and whither of the human soul. These questions lie at the basis of religion. And if the future of the individual mind may be regarded as a fit subject of speculative thought, the future of this human terrestrial society may be inserted in the same list. One can hardly say that science has made herself complete mistress of this territory. We still debate what is the ideal of a perfect human society —what is the ideal to which we are tending, and the realization of which should be the aim of successive generations. While this debate lasts our Sociology cannot be altogether abstracted from the region of Speculative Thought.

I use the term Philosophy in this modern and restricted, but still somewhat vague, sense. Striking as the contrast is between it and science on some subjects, there are others in which this distinction grows fainter and fainter as we examine it. Philosophy, in

Digitized by Google

its best aspects, may be but science in the making;—a very slow making, it will be added. I include in it certain well-known theological and social problems; some that concern the nature of the individual man, and some that concern that organized whole, the human society, which has its own progressive movement.

I.

At all events, in this present era in which we live, there is a field of inquiry called Philosophy, in which no man steps forward to teach, as he would teach in any department of science, as he would teach a system of astronomy or chemistry. No man can here present himself as the interpreter of a system of truths and doctrines which, whether complete or not, is the scientific creed of all his contemporaries who have studied the subject, the scientific creed, let us say, with some few diversities, of every university in the world. In this region of inquiry professor is arrayed against professor, and one eminent authority is neutralized by another authority equally eminent. Every teacher is therefore compelled to come before us with the results of his own personal inquisitions, with convictions which he himself has wrought out with infinite toil; working his way, he also, from the very beginning, both aided and embarrassed at every step by the thoughtful utterances of his conflicting predecessors. It is not necessary that he should claim to have a philosophy of his own (in the sense of having an original system); but he, and indeed all men who are concerned in the study, must shape the scheme they finally adopt by their own labours. They cannot learn it as they might their

Digitized by Google

botany. They have to choose their theory of the universe out of several thrown before them.

Choose we must; we can hold a scheme of doctrine on no other conditions. The philosopher invites us to the discussion of questions that are *not* decided, on which each thinker must come to a decision for himself. Herein lies the troubled charm, the deep delight, and the peculiar mental discipline of philosophic studies. Science tasks the intellect of the student, and tasks it severely; but so far as he is a student only, and not a discoverer, tasks it only in the apprehension of what another teaches. But in Philosophy every student is compelled, not indeed to be a discoverer, but to be a judge, and a judge in the last resort of whatever claims to be a discovery or a truth. There is here no arrogance in deciding against the highest authority, for, choose which camp you will, you are sure to find great champions arrayed against you, with whom individually you would blush to compare yourself. The most modest student finds himself in the place of a judge before whom great advocates plead; he is bent on learning from them all he can, but at last he has to "take the papers home," and there decide the point.

It is a high, and solemn, and somewhat painful self-reliance which Philosophy imposes. In other studies I am one of the school; I enter and take my place in some social group; I step with light-hearted alacrity into a heritage of truths which have been gradually evolved by a succession of enterprising, laborious intellects. But here I am, against my will, isolated, individualized, compelled to begin the work again from the beginning, as if I were some solitary architect bridging chaos for the first time. Or let us say there are so

Digitized by Google

many bridges, all of dubious security, and some mere wrecks and ruins, out of whose fragments you are invited to build afresh. You have neither ambition nor power to originate a philosophy—you would so willingly know the truth on much easier terms; but it cannot be; you must at least choose your teacher, choose your guide; if you are capable of implicit faith, and desire only to submit to the Aristotle or the Plato of the day, you must still choose one out of several candidates for the spiritual supremacy; you must, at last, be shut up apart, like cardinals in their cells, to elect, from your solitude, the one Infallible.

We hear Philosophy condemned because of its uncertainty. How often lately have its three thousand years of obstinate questionings been contrasted with the onward march of science! But if Philosophy were certain it would become science, and cease to be Philosophy. Philosophy lies on the confines between night and morning; it is a perpetual dawn; it cannot also be the light of day. Science advances her boundary, extends her lines, her circumvallations, but wheresoever we overlook her ramparts there we encounter Philosophy. Whether it is desirable that there should be an arena where light and darkness contend together—an arena of thought where men of equal knowledge and equal power of apprehension *see* so differently—I cannot venture to determine. One would naturally say, Give us certainty, give us truth, or at all events that universal conviction that passes for truth; give us universal science. Let it be *all* science! Away with this chaotic, cloud-encumbered region of speculative thought, this alternation of doubt and faith! Well, the

Digitized by Google

prayer may be wise or not—may be one day granted or not; but such is not at present the intellectual condition of mankind. There exists for us this field of inquiry in which the reflective man of every generation is invited to exercise, in solitary, self-reliant manner, the utmost power of thought that is in him. And what seems strange, it is precisely in this field of inquiry that he meets those problems which wear the most momentous aspect to him—problems of God and his own soul, and in later times, of the future of collective humanity. Yes, and our speculative thoughts, though you call them but the mists of the morning, are amongst the most practical realities of life; for laws and governments, and the moral tone of society, are affected by them in a surprising manner. So that if the individual thinker were ready to forego a fruitless search, ready to resign what he may have brought himself to regard as a morbid curiosity, a mere turbulent desire for knowledge where knowledge is not attainable, society would not willingly permit the resignation. Such has been the craving for certainty, where certainty has not been granted, that the philosopher has again and again turned priest, and converted into a divine oracle the suggestions of his troubled soul. Perhaps it seemed to him inspired by Heaven. By this device has he not transformed the morning mist, a changeful exhalation of the earth, into the eternal rock? And the device has succeeded for a time. But by-and-by the spirit of inquiry—rebelling against the mysterious authority that would repress it—was sure to revive. Some rival philosopher, as ardent perhaps for intellectual freedom, as his prede-

Digitized by Google

cessor for intellectual and moral government, breaks the charm. The rock becomes mist again. We must shape it into new forms; perhaps—who knows?—into forms better suited to the coming time.

II.

I remarked at the outset of these papers that one of the earliest topics the psychologist has to encounter—perception, or our knowledge of the external world—led him, whether he desired it or not, into the speculative region assigned to metaphysics. He is compelled to ask himself, what is the nature of that matter we say we know? what is the nature of that mind which we say knows or perceives? And on the answer he gives to these questions may depend the whole character of his philosophy. He may take up his position, so to speak, in the individual consciousness, regarding the external world as, in fact, the phenomena of his own mind, a production caused, in part, it may be, by something in space, but still a production of his own, in which his knowledge begins and ends. Or, if he believes in the independent existence of material forms, and their movements in space, he may find his point of departure out of himself, he may advance from these primary existences or facts, through the successive stages of a world-development, up to the human mind, or, more properly speaking, up to *man*, since the individual will probably be to him a complex of physical, vital, and psychical properties.

I venture to ask the reader to accompany me for a few steps in this region of speculative thought; so far, at least, as to determine which of these two methods,

Digitized by Google

or points of departure, we should adopt; whether we should interpret all nature from the conscious man, or whether the man himself is not the last and greatest individuality produced by the gathered forces of nature—forces and their relations which some of us make bold to describe as due to the power and intelligence of God.

Although I have already touched upon the nature of our knowledge of the material world, I must unavoidably resume the topic. It is just this knowledge that extends and assumes new phases, and becomes all our science and half our philosophy. And the psychological perplexity in which it lies involved is a hinderance to our path. Moreover, it so happens that this psychological perplexity has been lately revived amongst us by some of our most eminent thinkers. Have we any knowledge of things in themselves, or of things as they exist independently of the percipient? Or is what we call our knowledge mere phenomena or appearances, bred of sensation alone?

To many the question itself will appear absurd, such confident belief have they in the independent existence of material forms and movements. "I can understand," they would say, "or, at all events, I can aspire to understand this proposition—that the whole world is dependent on the Power and Intelligence of God: that it is in some way, inconceivable to me, the manifestation in space of such Power and Intelligence; that it exists, but is not *self*-existent. The distinction is hard to seize, but I will do my best to apprehend it. But if you tell me that what I seem to know as existing in space is merely a manifestation of *my own* intelligence, or some phantasmagoria of the senses, I revolt

Digitized by Google

at the proposition. Surely there was a world in space, sun and earth, and innumerable activities, harmonized and progressive, before man came upon the scene. Will you tell me, with the late Professor of St. Andrews, that the world *cum me* is the only *intelligible* world, the only world (I presume must be meant) in which order reigns supreme? Or will you tell me, with the present Professor of Aberdeen, that all my knowledge is but knowledge of my own sensations—the cause of such sensations being utterly withdrawn from me—that I have, in fact, no knowledge at all, only synchronous or successive sensations, their memories and their anticipations? I will try to conceive of the world—and will thank you if you can here assist my conceptions—as the act, or innumerable acts, of one Being, whom I know as the source of all movement, force, order, and harmony. But some of these activities were put forth before others. There is an order in their appearance. I, as an individual, was a body before I was a soul. The earth in *its* individuality underwent many changes before it was the vegetable-bearing and animal-bearing earth, which it is at present. What is to become of Astronomy and Geology, or Physiology itself, if I know nothing of material forms and movements, nothing of laws mechanical or chemical—know nothing but my own sensations and *their* laws of sequence and combination?"

With some such indignant protest many will dismiss the controversy at once. But however true it may be that science, as well as common-sense, demands the conviction of a world of matter and motion existing independently of us the percipients of it, this conviction has

Digitized by Google

been and is still disputed by metaphysicians of more than one school of thought. This fundamental faith, as some have termed it, has been disputed in our own days, and by men of scientific culture. It must be a perplexity worth our while to investigate which men of highly trained intellects, our own contemporaries, throw in our path. It is a perplexity, moreover, of old standing, and lies across the threshold of philosophy.

The perplexity is this. On one hand stands the obstinate invincible conviction that solid forms exist and move in space. On the other hand, it is triumphantly asked, What is your solid form? As the coloured form is acknowledged to be only your sensation of light, taking this appearance in space, so the solid form must be allowed to be only your own sensation of touch assuming, directly or indirectly, some localization in space. If the form is resolvable into touch or vision, the solidity is especially resolvable into certain muscular sensations. You cannot begin with knowing that there is some body in outer space, and then attach to that body your muscular feeling of resistance; you must start from this muscular feeling. The solid form is this combination of tactual and muscular sensations. How it is that many and various sensations come through some function of the brain to assume the character of *presentations* or perceptions, may at present be but dimly understood. But it is evident that your perceptions are, in their ultimate analysis, your own sensations, and it is equally evident that your knowledge of matter is reducible to these perceptions. How, then, can you possibly claim a knowledge of matter, such as it is apart from you the percipient?

Digitized by Google

If it is said that these perceptions *represent* realities, the answer is ready, How can we know that they represent anything? A picture represents a thing because we know the so-called thing, and see the imitation of it. But if the presentation is all that we have, if things and their imitations, and all the universe are but, in fact, these presentations—how can we get behind or beyond them? We must rest in them.

The perplexity seems irremovable. And so it is while the premisses here assumed are conceded. They cannot be conceded. Sensation, which in itself is a pleasure or a pain, cannot be all there is in perception, in that presentation, or ideation, which no mortal disputes. That spreading out of our sensations in space, into forms, which, however brought about, is an indisputable fact, is but another name for the perception of the relation of position. Localization is impossible with one position only, it is the relation perceived or apprehended between two or more points in space. For this reason I prefer to speak of it as a judgment rather than an idea. The idea of space enters in a concrete of sensations and judgment. The pure idea of space is a subsequent abstraction. In the simplest perception there is the intellectual element of judgment.

Again, this analysis of solidity is manifestly defective. In addition to the muscular sensations here spoken of, there is the relation perceived between these forms, their changes of position, their movements, and mutual repulsions—perceived relations which, in other words, are our ideas of force or activity. In perception *by the hand* the moving hand is one body, and the other body is brought to our knowledge partly by the contrast

Digitized by Google

apprehended between it and empty space; it is at first *that part of space* where the movement of the hand is impeded, and where also those sensations arise which come to be a measure of the resistance. In perception *by the sight* the body, or form, external to our own is at once given to the consciousness. Solidity is the resistance between form and form, converting form into body. Or it may be described as that *space-occupancy* which we infer to be permanent here and there and everywhere around us, as a necessary condition of such resistance.

I do not speak of these sense-forms as *representing* realities, I say that in the evolution of thought they become, or usher in a knowledge of realities. The relations of position, of movement, of resistance—these impose on them an objective character. Our own sensations, which ushered in all this knowledge, we are afterwards able to separate from forms which uphold themselves in our consciousness by virtue of these relations. The forms *belong to space*, the movements *belong to the forms*, which now define each other by their reciprocal activities.

Some psychologists introduce at the earliest epochs of our consciousness an intuitive idea of causation. Our sensations have a cause from without, and this cause is our matter. It is a violent supposition which I do not find it necessary to make. Some image or presentation is first given by the senses and the intellect, in the manner I have described, and *this* is regarded as cause of our sensations. It is only the scientific or reflective mind that makes a clear distinction between matter as the cause of our sensations,

Digitized by Google

and matter as it comes to us clothed in these very sensations of which we say it is the cause. The infant knows the external thing as a hindrance to the movement of its limbs, as a support to its own body, as something it strikes on with its little fist. But the impediment to motion excites its muscular sensations, and the support, or the thing struck, may give pleasure or pain, be soft or hard. What it would call the cause of its sensations would be just the concrete perception made up in part of those very sensations.

So far, then, from being unable to think a material world independent of ourselves as percipients, this is the only world we do think of. We make mistakes. The unreflective man thinks that colour belongs to the object in space. He corrects his mistake, and thinks his objective world without the colour. But to get a clear notion of this independent world is the aim he constantly puts before himself.

Yet it is just this mode of thinking that some of our subtlest contemporaries deny to be possible. Mr. Bain cautions us against any such attempt. In making it he says, "We are affirming that to have an existence *out of the mind* which we cannot know but as *in our mind*. In words we assert independent existence, while in the very act of doing so we contradict ourselves. Even a possible world implies a possible mind to perceive it, just as much as an actual world implies an actual mind to perceive it." It is indisputably true that the conscious man must find everything, so to speak, in his own consciousness. But he finds space and time there, that is, he thinks them, and when he thinks things as verily belonging to space, and thinks

Digitized by Google

them as acting upon each other, he must inevitably think them as independent of himself. His consciousness is just this mode of thinking. If, indeed, the forms which he perceives in space are proved to be only his own sensations, he takes them back from outer space; he has detected the delusion; his sensations cannot be the space-occupants he thought he had perceived. But forms that support each other in his consciousness by their reciprocal attractions, movements, and repulsions, can be thought of only in one way, namely, as belonging to space, and independent of the percipient.

But all is delusion!—thought as well as sense. So some have exclaimed. Space itself is purely subjective. Intellect, or judgment, or idea, as well as sensibility, is but some activity of mind, whatever mind may be.

That, again, is very true. Knowledge is some activity of mind, whatever mind may be. *Knowledge* of form and motion is something totally different from form and motion themselves. I cannot get further than my knowledge. Neither can I escape from my knowledge. Universal scepticism is impossible, because it is impossible for a living conscious man not to think, and to think is to have such and such truths or convictions before us. What is meant by calling space subjective? It is, of course, my thought, but the nature of the thought cannot be altered by this new name. There is but one possible mode of thinking space and its contents. The relations apprehended between space and the space-occupant, and between the space-occupants themselves, these I cannot escape from,

Digitized by Google

and these are tantamount to a conviction of the reality of things.

Mr. Bain would pronounce us very obtuse for not perceiving that solidity is nothing *but* a muscular sensation; I am sure that the majority of his critics will pronounce that a psychology which leads him to such a paradoxical result, must somewhere be defective. In his theory, and in Mr. Mill's, there is no other known property of what we call matter than the property of exciting sensations in us. Therefore we cannot think a world but in relation to ourselves. But if we can think this property, this relation (I am not quite clear whether one of these philosophers would even grant so much)—but if we can think this property we can also think other properties, other relations, those between matter and matter, and thinking these we think a world that upholds itself independently of us. We believe that Calcutta exists—so many houses, so many people, bodies animate and inanimate, a city we may go to see; we do not merely believe that if we cross the ocean we shall have a certain series or collection of sensations to be called Calcutta. And so of the ocean we cross, its property of fluidity is not merely some sensation of ours, it is essentially a relationship between the solid and the fluent matter. And what of motion? If we see a thing in motion, and then shut our eyes, and afterwards open them again when the thing is in another part of the earth or sky, do we not believe in the absolute motion of the thing? Do we merely believe this, that if we had kept our eyes open we should have continued to see it move?

Digitized by Google

I beg to observe that it is not to any tribunal of instinct or common-sense that I would carry this question. It is our latest conceptions of matter, and not our earliest, to which I would appeal. It required some advance in the science of optics, and some knowledge of the organ of sight, before it could be clearly understood that colour had in fact no existence in the object—that so far as the object or the inorganic world is concerned, it is a peculiar movement. And it seems to have required some reflection before force or momentum, as due simply to rapidity of movement, or the mass of the moving body, was quite separate from that sensation of effort which accompanies our muscular movements, and in which the popular mind sees the force itself. Common-sense has the trick of forgetting how slowly it learnt some of its most confident and *fundamental* convictions. What cannot be possibly driven out of space, what may be shattered into fragments or driven beyond our atmosphere, but cannot be expelled from space—that shall be our matter. But this favourite definition which common-sense utters as if it never doubted it, we owe to the science of chemistry. It was the chemist who first taught us that what is burnt is not destroyed, has only changed its form; taught us the marvellous transformations from the solid to the fluid, from the fluid to the vapour, from the vapour back to the solid—taught us that in each of these states the same matter has its peculiar properties or relations to other matter.

We call upon the psychologist to explain the actual human thought that is in us; he must not substitute another for it and then explain *that*.

Digitized by Google

III.

I ask myself what is the last conception we form of matter. For those who are agreed that they know it as an objective reality in space, differ in the description or definition they would give of this reality.

I suppose we all have the same idea of motion, but of matter and force thoughtful men give different accounts. According to one theory there is always the same amount of motion in the universe, and *force* is only the transference of motion from one body to another. Viewed in the light of this theory, force is a sequel to motion, it is the effect of a moving body on some other body. These theorists see, in imagination, every molecule of matter in incessant motion, vibratory or rotary, and explain all the phenomena of chemistry, as well as of heat and light, by changes of direction and velocity of movement. For motion itself no cause can be assigned by the human mind. The more generally received theory regards matter as capable of exerting force, that is of originating and directing motion in other bodies, even though itself stationary, or, at all events, independently of its own motion, for absolutely stationary perhaps no matter is. Attraction of gravity and chemical affinity seem to them to demand this concession. Here the term force attains another meaning, difficult to apprehend, yet perhaps not more so than that force of momentum and pressure which the most ardent seeker of simplicity is compelled to admit. A third class of theorists has converted the atom itself into a force. These speak of space-occupancy as itself a force. Here we lose sight of our old landmarks. Force was

Digitized by Google

the action of Space-occupant on Space-occupant. If our Space-occupants are themselves a force, force must be conceived as the entity we contrast with the void of space, or as the acting of some supernatural agent *on* or *in* space.

This last notion, which resolves both matter and force into the action, or innumerable actions, of one Being to which we assign no place at all, either because it fills all space, or is altogether unrelated to space, is a great favourite with speculative thinkers, and has a fascination in it I readily admit. We see the idea of Being which at first presented itself as broken up, and limited to the moving and resisting thing in space, develop itself till it attains the unity, and majesty, and spirituality to which we give the sublimest of all names. But I decline at present to ascend to these heights of speculation. I take my stand on a lower level—one, however, from which the ascent to such heights may be not impracticable.

The advance of science may possibly unite all men in one definition of matter and force. In our present imperfect knowledge I can detect nothing more clear than this—that the space-occupant is marked out and individualized to us by its capability of receiving impressions, as well as of communicating them. The union of passivity and activity distinguishes the atom. Its activity is the result of its passivity; its passivity is, in fact, but the expression of the activity of some other atom.

It is very easy to resolve passivity into a form of activity. The capability of receiving impressions is shown only in some action; but then, when we turn to

Digitized by Google

action in the material world, we require the *acted on*. We may either express the relation by saying that force must be dual, or by the old terms passivity and activity. In either case we have to conceive the space-occupants as being *there*, else how conceive of their relations to each other as active and passive, or as acting together?

But—and this is the point on which I desire to lay stress—while the relative demands the positive, or the two positives, while every case of action requires as prior condition the two space-occupants, our *positives*, our space-occupants, reveal themselves only in their relations, only in this co-agency. You can think of either apart, because every whole has parts, and these may separately occupy the mind, but the parts have gathered all by which you think them from their relations to each other. Always it will be found that some whole formed by the relation of parts presents itself to us whenever we reflect upon our conception of matter

I confidently, therefore, conclude that, in addition to space-occupancy, motion, and force, we must define matter as that which *organizes itself, or is always organized*. The first or simplest individuality we can descend to will be found to be a whole and parts, a complexity, in relation with other complexities.

And not only is matter never known to us except as organized, it is apparently organizing itself in new and, as we think, in advanced modes. But in every stage what we call new does not come in as a distinct and separate novelty, it is a combination of old and new. Life is more than chemistry, but it is chemistry also. Mind is more than life, but it is life also.

Try to think of matter in its simplest conditions.

Digitized by Google

We say of water, for instance, that it is a fluid, that it has a peculiar movement called flowing, which becomes possible by its relation to a more solid surface. But if the water is stationary, what then? Perhaps I answer it has a *potential* fluidity. What do I mean by this *potentiality?* What *will be* does not *now* exist. What now exists is a stationary mass. Science responds that a certain coherence of particles exists, such that the flowing movement will occur if the solid surface on which the water rests is altered, or its equilibrium is otherwise disturbed. A potential existence means then the existence of those main conditions on which some expected future depends. This answers very well in the case of fluidity. Now I advance to the particle itself of matter. I define it as simply as I can by its impenetrability. Here, too, if I have a complex body approached by another body, I can say that it has a potential impenetrability, even before the collision takes place. It has that coherence of particles which will enable it to resist dispersion or division. But I am concerned with one single particle. How am I to represent its potentiality of resistance? I cannot represent it at all. My unit of existence is not one atom, but two or more in their related activities. It is organized matter I alone know.

IV.

Having justified, I trust, the ordinary conviction on which science proceeds of a world in space prior to, or independent of, human thought, I may contemplate mind as it is related to this world, as it appears in its place in the series of developments.

Digitized by Google

Astronomy speculates on the genesis of a planetary system from some revolving nebula in a surrounding ether. Geology, with far more certainty, teaches the changes in the organization of our globe fitting it for life, or for new life. The physiologist takes up the marvellous tale, showing the development of life, of sensation, of thought. Even the metaphysician, who bids us despair of forming the conception of a material world independent of the percipient, commences his, in many respects, admirable treatise with a careful description of the organs of sense and locomotion, of the brain and the nerves. Apparently he acknowledges that the psychical manifestations he intends to discourse upon, are postponed till certain organs are grown. I will not ask for an explanation of this apparent discrepancy: this would only take us back to the debate we have just left, and which we must consider closed, or we shall never be able to advance at all. The physiologist shows us a heart beating in the embryo before a brain is formed. Life is there—that new activity we call vital movement—but not sensation. He bids us wait the growth of nerves and a brain before the psychical properties of feeling and knowing, before a consciousness can be developed. Such is the order of evolution, or creation.

Reflecting upon ourselves as conscious creatures, each individual seems shut up in his own consciousness. All that is without,—the physical world, and even the society that surrounds him,—are but his own thoughts. How often is it said that each of us has a world of his own that nothing can enter! This is the individuality which the metaphysician delights to contemplate. The

Digitized by Google

Ego which he generally describes is just the consciousness itself, viewed as a permanent reality, or referred to some permanent reality known only as that which is conscious.

Such attitude the reflective mind assumes. But, pursuing our reflections, we detect that, if there be a real knowledge, and a thing known, then the mere faculty to know is incomplete, or nugatory, without the thing to be known. The thing most intimately and constantly known is our own body and its movements. If, therefore, the *that which* knows is a distinct entity, it is as good as nothing till there is something to know. The faculty of knowledge is justly esteemed as the greatest or most exalted property that has come into the world, but the world and the living body must have been there before it. A *self* was never attained without the union of a knowing, and a thing known.

But we not only need this body of ours as a lodgment for this new property, or entity, and as that which is first of all and constantly *to be known.* It seems as if the new entity could not act at all, except in a certain condition of the vital organs, or some of them. We need the eye to see with, the ear to hear with; we need the brain, not only to act with these organs, but to act as reviver of that knowledge obtained through them. The modern anatomist has drawn from its hiding-place, behind the eye and the ear, this strange organ—so shapeless to look at, so wondrous in the new activities it develops, or in the part it plays in their development. It is suspected that there occurs no change in consciousness that is unaccompanied by some action of this organ; and it is moreover supposed that

Digitized by Google

in many cases such action leaves behind it some slight alteration in the structure or composition of the brain itself, whereby it is rendered more fit for that very action. I know not whether it be so, but Habit, which lies at the basis of all individual progress, has been explained as a growth of this description.

How simple a thing was nutrition to our forefathers! We fed this body, we stuffed these pipes of ours, and there an end. No doubt the body could not do its work without food. We were satisfied with understanding this truth, and giving it the necessary supply. But modern science has pushed its curiosity beyond this. It has watched the course of this nutrition, taken note of the why it was wanted, seen the tissue waste and disintegrate in its very functions, seen it hold its permanence in a perpetual transmutation. I need not enter into details; how far the physiologist has been able to trace a specific function to the several parts of the nervous and cerebral system,—which are thus perpetually being destroyed and restored,—is known to every reader of these papers.

But observe the sort of revolution in our thinking that has taken place. It was always recognised that we wanted the material outside world as the common instructor of us all, the common object of our knowledge. When we speak of true or false in the events of life, or the theories of science, it is tacitly understood that, while there are millions of minds, there is but one real world from which they all draw their knowledge. Two men differ in their measurement of Chimborazo. Let them go and measure it again, and yet again, till they both agree. Chimborazo stands

Digitized by Google

there, impartial umpire. General assent is perhaps your synonym for truth, but how is general assent obtained or preserved, unless by the teaching of one great instructor? Now, in these modern times, this outside world, this environment we live in, is also recognised as taking its part—through this process of nutrition—in building up the learner himself, building up tissues that seem to feel; seem——

For here comes in the question, often so angrily discussed amongst us, whether the psychical properties which constitute consciousness are properties of the old substance we called matter, or whether properties so novel do not imply an altogether new substance or entity, we call spirit? A question difficult to decide. Indeed I am more impressed with the difficulty, than with the extreme importance of the question, which does not appear to me to be quite of that momentous nature which our controversies assume it to be. For say there is this separate substance, called spirit, what have we before us in man? A new organization, a new whole, composed of this spirit and the vital frame. And in this new whole only is the spirit found, whose first office and manifestation is the knowing this body and what immediately surrounds it. This new individuality, Man, is like every other individuality in nature—a complexity, a whole composed of parts, whose unity consists in some harmony of forces or properties.

Amongst the speculative thinkers of Greece and Rome, and amongst the early fathers of the Church, it was the prevailing opinion that the soul was a kind of ethereal matter. With this species of dualism we

Digitized by Google

need not now concern ourselves. Matter has grown so ethereal under the investigations and theories of modern science that the imagination toils in vain to represent what are nevertheless described as physical agents. That ether, whose pulsations are light for us, presents a subtlety we cannot go beyond, for we strive in vain to apprehend it. If mere tenuity and refinement is what the imagination seeks, we find these sufficiently amongst declared physical phenomena.

The speculative thinker, however, wanted more than refinement, he wanted for his new substance permanence; he wanted a one permanent substance which he could call himself, and which, existing through all surrounding changes, might exist, itself unchanged, even in other worlds. He seems slowly to have convinced himself that this something permanent could not be any form of matter which is always in movement, decomposing and recomposing, and he devised the *unextended substance;* spirit stood out in clear contrast to matter. Who, indeed, first introduced this form of dualism, what Eastern or Western sage, I know not. It is, perhaps, as old as philosophy itself. But it was not the popular philosophy of Europe, so historians write, till the time of Descartes, who had much to do in giving it shape and currency.

This dualism has always held its ground in defiance of notorious difficulties. I need hardly mention them. How is motion, it is asked, of the extended substance to affect the unextended? And that motion of a mechanical or molecular kind is connected with feeling, and feeling again with motion, is surely an indisputable fact. We all know how Leibnitz contrived his "pre-

Digitized by Google

established harmony" to escape from this difficulty, and we all know that the result of his pre-established harmony was to make the difficulty more prominent than ever. Men admired the ingenious contrivance, but only thought the more of the perplexity from which it was intended to relieve them.

But the difficulties are not all on one side. For instance, it is the law of physics that contact of moving matter produces motion. Now in the brain there must be a point where motion no longer produces motion, but feeling. How can we reconcile this with our law of physics? The brain, as material substance, is under the laws of motion, and must respond to impulse—by motion and by *all* the motion due to that impulse. There is no room for any other effect. To say that sensation is a transmuted force is simply to say that there comes in a new *quality*, which bears, or may bear, in its degree, some correspondence with the mechanical force of motion for which it is substituted. But the substitution remains. At a certain moment matter no longer responds to motion by motion, but by feeling. What has become of our laws of motion? It is true that in the phenomena of vital movement we may be said to have already departed from the laws of physics, for here a movement ensues which appears to have little or no correspondence with the impulse which prompts it. But here the physicist, with his still half-understood laws of electricity and galvanism, may make his protest—file a sort of *ne exeat regno,* till the case is decided.

That there is this *New Becoming* is the great and indisputable fact; marvellous, as indeed every Becom-

Digitized by Google

ing has been and is. A sharper distinction there is not in all nature than that between motion and sensibility. There is no possibility of confounding them, nor does one slide into the other. The utmost rapidity of motion cannot be conceived as approximating to feeling by reason of its rapidity. Sensation is as distinct from motion, as motion from rest.

But this New Becoming makes its appearance in a vital frame, full of its own peculiar movements. Now do you ask, What feels? Not surely that vital frame *minus* its feeling. As moving-thing, or as space-occupant, it does not feel. The only answer open to us is that this concrete made up of motion and of feeling—feels. The answer looks at first like a mere subterfuge, but it is the answer with which we are obliged to content ourselves in all similar cases. What moves? Not the space-occupant merely as such. You add the very property of motion to the space-occupant, and then say *it* moves. What thinks? Not a moving or vitalized body. You add the property of thought, and then say, The man thinks. A new whole, a new individuality has entered into the world. To ask for its origin is to approach the problem of creation, or to view matter as organizing itself, or as developing still new properties.

Cause in Science is the series, is the order; Cause in Metaphysics is the origin of the series or order.

Science is perfectly right in limiting itself to its own Causation. But all that it teaches only stimulates us the more to ask what it *is* that develops the series, the order, the organizations ever advancing, as it seems, in their nature. It may be deemed but a poor account to give of our individuality, or personal being, that it is

Digitized by Google

just this new whole that moves, and grows, *and thinks.* But if you would extend this account you must be prepared to answer the question, What is the origin of the whole world as it develops itself in space and in time, in physical and in psychical properties? And accordingly there are not wanting those who say that their *Ego* itself rests on the Omnipotent.

What is it that *resists* us in the simplest stone, or merest clod, we strike our foot against? It is some aggregate of atoms held together by a force of coherence, and which we further describe by this very resistance. In the clod of earth stands and grows a living plant. Its very materials are gathered from the soil and the air, by the aid of the inconceivably rapid movements of heat and light. Do you ask, What grows and lives? We say it is the plant, and we define the plant by this very life and growth. To atoms and their chemistry was added *that* by means of which a new whole, the living plant, came into existence. Up to the plant walks the animal, and grazes on it. This creature grows, and feels, and moves spontaneously. *What* feels? Just this animal which we describe by many properties, and last and chiefly, by this very property of feeling. Such property had stolen into the world, and manifested itself there, and formed that new concrete or whole which we call the sensitive animal. There is no other answer. And if you ask, What thinks? It is man, another organism into which this property has entered, greatest of properties yet known, and known as part of this new whole. At every stage we have a new organization, or individuality, composed of old and new. Whence came the

Digitized by Google

new? Whence came the old? This is the problem of creation. What moves? admits but of one answer. It is this very compound of space-occupancy and motion. What introduced motion into the universe is another question. What thinks? It is this very creature who lives, and moves, and feels, and also thinks. What introduced thought into the universe, and so constructed this new individuality? That is another question.

This incessant *becoming*, how are we to deal with it? Am I to accept it as an ultimate fact, like being itself? for indeed every being (in the form it wears to us) was also a becoming. Am I to devise an "unknowable cause," and attribute to it our evolving series? Or may I not advance at once to the supposition that this evolving whole we have before us existed as a thought before it existed in space, or as an actuality? May I not leap at once to this supposition, and deduce what I can from it? What *has been* determines what *is*, and both together what *will be*. But if the past determines the future, does not *that whole that is to be* determine every part of the series? And how can this be conceived but on the supposition that the whole pre-existed in thought?

On the great subject of the creation of the world the wisest, we are told, are the most reticent. One feels it almost a presumption to discuss it at all. And what says Matthew Arnold in one of his terse, melodious, and thoughtful verses?—

> "Achilles ponders in his tent,
> The kings of modern thought are dumb,
> Silent they are, though not content,
> And wait to see the future come."

Digitized by Google

A mere soldier of the rank and file would venture to suggest to those who have a certain repugnance to the term, or the idea of creation, that an *evolution that results in ever new individualities* would be no bad definition of creation. And such an evolution makes itself known to us.

No justice could be done to the religious problem without some preparatory study of man in his social and emotional aspects. And our present concern was to determine what philosophical writers often call a stand-point. Ours cannot be the individual man; but the great cosmos in which he appears—so much of it as we can embrace. We are accustomed to say that we proceed from the simple to the complex, and from the lower to the higher. But the simplest to which we can descend is still a complexity, and in proceeding from the lower to the higher we confessedly indicate an *order* only of development, we do not say that the lower actually produces the higher. Either the whole development is to be *accepted* as one absolute fact, or we make attempt to pass on to the developing power and intelligence. But always it must be our endeavour to study the individual as part of the whole cosmos, so far as that is revealed to us.

We are confessedly in the region of philosophy or speculative thought, where it would be unbecoming to dogmatize. For myself this obstinate conception occurs again and again, that the whole, as it develops, and will be developed, in space and time, determined all the parts of that whole—which it could only do on the supposition that it pre-existed in thought, the thought, therefore, of some Being capable of *so* think-

Digitized by Google

ing and *so* acting,—not thinking or acting as a human being. I find this conviction even stronger in me than that which demands some one permanent being (conscious or unconscious) as mere *cause* of all this Becoming we witness; though the two lines of thought may easily be harmonized. But whatever conception we strive to form of this speculative nature, it is indisputable fact that matter exists nowhere for us but as organized; it rises before us as *ordered*—the expression of reason as we think. It is ever a whole, and ever a becoming. Need I add that we know only a small portion of that whole, even as hitherto developed, and must make up our cosmos of the very little we do know?

Digitized by Google

PART IV.

OUR PASSIONS.

I.

BEFORE we approach the problems of Sociology, we should frame for ourselves some distinct ideas of man as a social being; we should understand his passions, or what we should call the emotional side of the human consciousness.

As I have endeavoured to show, in treating of the feelings or passions, as in dealing with our cognitions, it is still the same one consciousness we have before us—which is ever composed of cognitions and feelings. Our Perceptions are some union of sensations and judgments; and in Thought our perceptions have become memories, and our sensations have become passions. To think of a pain and pleasure, as Mr. James Mill and other analytical writers have observed, is itself a new pain or pleasure; it is in fact a passion; is a regret or a fear, an anger or a hope.

Every passion rests on some cognition. Love and Hate are unintelligible without an object of love or hate, and these feelings are modified according to their objects, and the kind of actions they lead to. We have no way of defining our passions but by describing the objects, the events, the various cognitions insepar-

Digitized by Google

ably combined with them. Beyond the broad distinction that some are pleasurable and others painful, we should be utterly unable to describe our passions if we attempted to separate them from the cognitions with which they are thus indissolubly connected—forming together one moment or act of consciousness. How distinguish Ambition from any other excitement, Envy from any other vexation, unless by marking out the kind of objects, the kind of acts, these feelings are combined with?

Whether we think of the past or the future, whether ideation shall take the shape of memory or anticipation, seems to decide at once on the nature of the feeling. The past pleasure becomes a regret, or it becomes a hope or a desire. The past pain thought of only in the past is anger and unmitigated vexation; mix with it thought of that action to which it may prompt, and it becomes revenge.

Knowing and Feeling are the two psychical elements of the human consciousness. Will, or bodily action, is the relation between this consciousness and the muscles of the human frame.

The intellectual and emotional elements can neither of them be extolled at the expense of the other. To the reason or intellect we may very justly ascribe all that is progressive in man,—his choice, his self-government, his knowledge, his advancement even in this matter of passion. But in his passions or emotions lies all that we call his happiness or misery. Take either element away and the man is no longer man; a human consciousness is no longer before us.

Our own passions, with all that results from them,

Digitized by Google

become the objects of reflection. We learn to prefer love to hate: not by any means the first truth we learn; in its fulness it is rather the last and the most essential to human well-being. All passions equally assert themselves while they rest in the state of actual passion. But as intelligence advances Hate becomes subordinate to Love. Hate at last is compelled to claim admittance on the plea of doing the offices of Love, accomplishing the purposes of a world-embracing Benevolence. Hate limited to anger against the wrong, the vile, the malicious, is admitted; in its own first nature as the triumphant inflictor of pain it is reproved. Love, on the contrary, in its proper character as the giver of pleasure, has been expanded and approved, and becomes the *divine* in man.

Feeling is not only that which constitutes us happy or miserable, and so gives its very value to our knowledge (for even the mathematician amongst abstractions—that are to remain abstractions—has a *gratification* in the solution of his problems without which they never would have been problems for him), but it is the element in our consciousness which is more especially concerned in that onward movement from thought to thought, and from thought to action, which constitutes the very energy of life.

All continuous thinking must be also varied thinking, that is, there must be some movement or change, in however limited an arena, or the conscious life ceases. Now, we are not sufficiently acquainted with the nature of cerebral movements to determine all their laws. There may be, and probably is, some cerebration not impelled by passion or feeling of any kind.

Digitized by Google

But what is very patent to us is this, that all thinking other than a dream, or dream-like reverie, or such as is manifestly dependent on the senses for the direction that it takes, all that the adult mind cares to designate as its thinking, is carried on by an energy in some way imparted by desire, or an energy the presence of which becomes known to us by this apparent relation between desire and the onward progress of life.

There is no essential difference between thinking for a purpose and acting for a purpose. *Physiologically*, we should say that in the one case the movements were limited to the brain, in the other case they had extended through the motor nerves to the muscles. *Psychologically*, we can only take notice of the fact that our passionate or emotional thought, our purpose, has led to other thoughts, or led also to movements of the limbs. All energetic thinking might be called a willing. This momentum from thought to thought we call our activity. We say that man possesses this activity. A solitary thought, if such can be imagined, gives no sentiment of power, no idea of activity.

The great law of Habit, on which so much rests, let us bear in mind, is to us one of nature's activities *known*. Our knowing it is all we have to do with as conscious beings. It lies in our consciousness just as any other of the great laws of nature; it is there as a cognition. The knowledge of it gives us power, but we can no more explain it than we can explain any other of the laws of nature. The human being, because he knows what laws of habit are presiding over his consciousness, can take advantage of them—just as he can take advantage of any law of hydrostatics; here, as elsewhere, knowledge

Digitized by Google

is power. He practises his art—he persists in endeavouring, in purposing; he has no conception how it is that practice makes perfect—but he knows it will; the schoolboy repeats his lesson, he knows that by the repetition he shall learn it, but neither he nor perhaps any one else knows anything more about this wondrous mechanism of memory. The moralist bids us beware of the cup once taken, the lie once told—the *only once* may break a habit; he bids us practise a virtue as we practise an art, if we would be perfect.

I must again observe that whether we call our state of mind a thought, or a passion, or a will, it is still the same one consciousness we have described as made up of Knowing and Feeling. We call it a Cognition or a Thought when the intellectual element which we have called judgment is prominent, we call it a sensation or a passion when the sensitive or emotional element prevails. What distinguishes will from other states of consciousness, is the special cognition and passions or sentiments that are involved in it,—special because they relate to the special organs of locomotion or muscular activity. The limb moves—not assuredly in the first instance by a distinct intention or purpose on our part that it should move, but by the laws of vitality or of animal life—the limb moves and meets resistance, which has the effect of stimulating or re-exciting the organs of locomotion—exciting the sensation that is appropriate to them. These sensations in the next stage become desire, become a passion—desire of movement, passion of thwarted desire; these, with the cognition of the resisting obstacle and the sensation excited in the limb, constitute our sense of effort. This

Digitized by Google

sense of effort, so far from being a very simple matter, has in it sensations, cognitions, *passions*.

So *Personality* is a special knowing. That the person is itself an *object* of thought becomes evident as well when we attempt to think ourselves as soul as when we attempt to think ourselves as body. Thought itself, if we could imagine it deprived of these objects, body, and soul in body (made thinkable to us in some manner because localized in the body), would be impersonal. Such thought would be an eternal Now : the past and future is the ever present consciousness.

This last conjecture may seem hypothetical, and I am quite aware on what delicate and subtle ground I am treading in this matter of personality. Our best authorities have held that the consciousness at once reveals the *it* and the *I*—the object and subject. *Thought* is necessarily *I think*—such is its formula. Well, let us adopt this view. Still the nature of the *I* has to be revealed and apprehended. And if *Thought* is always *I think*, still I think this *I* either as body or soul, and it becomes the object carried by me into the past and future. The subject must become an object when we think of it as *having been* in the past, and as that which will be in the future. What we call *personal identity* must be some personal body or soul. Certain philosophers of the associative school, who are assured of nothing but a train of sensations and thoughts, must find this problem of personal identity (as one of the most eminent of that school has confessed) peculiarly difficult.

It is because amongst our memories and anticipations is ever found the same one body alone ever pre-

Digitized by Google

sent, that personal identity arises. I do not regard, I may say, memory as any distinct faculty ; it is merely the development of the consciousness. All consciousness is founded on the relation of time. Memory and anticipation are merely experience of these relations.

But I must disentangle myself from these subtleties and proceed to some general remarks on the passions, of a more practical character.

We may notice how soon in the history of mental development sensation becomes passion. It does so the moment a pain is attributed to the object or person before us ; it then becomes anger. It does so the moment that it is remembered or anticipated, the moment it is thought of. I presume our passions require sensation as their condition. I presume that a creature who had known no pain would hardly know fear. But still the passion is a new development. And we should look in vain if we expected to find every fear precisely justified in its degree by any experienced pain. Probably passionate men are for the most part sensitive men, yet the anger any given man feels will not be measured by the pain he has suffered. Then we have the startling fact that to think of *another's pain* becomes compassion. Here we have a new development affiliated to the older fact of sensation, but not to be measured by it. We could not speak of such a degree of sensation being transformed into such a degree of compassion, as if we were dealing with chemical agents. The conscious life has a certain progressive, expansive development of its own. Then again there is that other sympathy, when the passion, whatever it may be, is communicated from one to the other by tone or gesture

Digitized by Google

—so that a *number* of people shall feel merely by this communication a passion in a far greater degree than each of them could do singly. How in all anger grows into rage when a multitude comes under the same passion.

It is evident that any analogy drawn from chemistry or chemical analysis soon breaks down. We are not in presence of mechanical and chemical or even vital laws, but of the laws of consciousness, which though based on these are distinct from them. If we permit ourselves to say that matter that is *vitalized* has new laws and properties, so we may say that matter that is *mentalized* has still other laws.

But the fact which above all seems to me to demand attention is the manner in which passions grow and modify with our thoughts. In other words, our two-fold consciousness presents ever its new phases of feeling with its new mode or enlargement of cognition. How this is to be presented physiologically I pretend not to say. The notion that feeling is in one portion of the brain and thought or ideation in another, does not assist one in the least,—rather adds to one's perplexity, for how conceive the co-operation and respective influence of the organs? Nor do I believe that our most eminent anatomists or physiologists hold to such division. I should find it easier to imagine that what was action in thinking was also sensation. The fact, however, is indisputable, that while Thought or intelligence is based in the first instance on sensation —the thought itself becomes the parent of new emotions, which new emotions or passions become in their turn the materials of Thought by being remembered or anti-

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND
Digitized by Google

cipated in conjunction with the objects with which they were first connected.

(All along it is *I* see it, *I* think it, I excogitate it, as if that vision, that thought, which really constitutes the *I* were something different from the I that saw *it*, thought *it*. As many metaphysicians have pointed out, the *I* here and its *it* both include the whole consciousness. The I is the consciousness spoken of as belonging to some *being*—which is the specific thought *plus* this reference of it to some permanent subject. What we have to study is consciousness, and the one Evolution of Thought and Feeling.)

This does not prevent me from saying and believing that this activity of thought and feeling belongs to me as an individual, because *such* thought is also evolved in my consciousness.

That such evolution has its law is not inconsistent with the fact that it evolves in a certain individual, which individuality is composed of other and more peculiar elements. When we are discussing the question of will or free-will, we are instantly referred to a certain spontaneous activity. Now, if I am to study human action, I find this highest activity, that which is to govern all else, is the reason and feeling of a man. I do not deny to the man this activity. And it comes to him, as it were, direct from Heaven. Direct from Heaven, and yet with a method. I find men impatient if they are reminded that it is not possible for a man to leap at once from the thoughts of a child to those of a man, or from the thoughts of a clown to those of a Socrates. But the man nevertheless energizes—as conscious man in his consciousness—he attributes this

Digitized by Google

activity to a self made up in part of this property, in part of other vital and mechanical properties.

II.

When we pass, as I have said, beyond the distinction pleasureable or painful, or the distinction of degree, as gentle or violent, we describe our passions by the objects that call them forth, or the events they lead to. To think of the object of our love or hate is the only way of recalling the passion; to think of some act of retaliation is the way to keep alive our anger or revenge. If anger needs nothing but the presence of the perceived object, revenge is essentially a thought, or thought—supported as it lives in and through the contemplation of that blow anger would or should have dealt, and still contemplates the dealing of. With revenge fear mingles very soon, and if we strike the first blow out of sheer anger, we strike the second out of fear that the injury should be repeated. We have not to wait for the calculations of expediency before we strike, wound, or destroy, to prevent the repetition of our pain. Fear acts the expediency at once, and the first task of reflection is to moderate her energy.

To think of another as the source of pleasure is to love him. It is the simplest phase of a feeling destined to many modifications as knowledge and thought expand. Some would hardly honour the feeling with the name of love till it had advanced one stage further, to the contemplation and desire of giving pleasure,—a new desire, a tenderness and a joy and a sense of power withal which we learn keenly to appreciate in others and in ourselves. Next, there enters the pleasure

Digitized by Google

of being loved, of being the object of affection, and this without any necessary reference to positive benefits which may flow from such affection. Men who love to be loved are generally those least desirous to receive actual benefits from those who love them.

(I would suggest in a parenthesis that the sentiment of Beauty is a modification of that of Love. It has in it the same tenderness, something of the same yearning to give pleasure—yearning that has no way of manifesting itself in action. It has been often objected to the association-theory that there is a radical difference between the pleasure of sensation and the feeling of beauty. Fundamentally the theory may be correct, but it should be understood that the sensations of pleasure have in their reproduction in memory taken the form of passion. The sentiment of Beauty is more akin to the passion of love than to the direct sensation of pleasure.)

Approbation is love with a reason given for it. There is judgment of some kind in all thinking, and therefore in all loving, but in approbation the judgment stands out conspicuous, and challenges examination.

That we admire strength and despise feebleness is founded on a very patent judgment of the excellent results of strength. But here we may notice the effect of comparison or contrast in heightening our admiration. I suppose if all had had the same degree of strength or courage there would have been no energetic admiration of these qualities: it would have required a certain philosophic or reflective attitude of mind to have appreciated them. It is the contrast of the brave man

Digitized by Google

with the coward that sets the former in such high relief.

In like manner if a man reflects upon himself, his self-approbation *begins* at least by some comparison with others. He contrasts himself favourably with others, and has a sentiment of elation or self-admiration. But our self-esteem finds its great support and corroboration in the esteem of others.

The known affections of others towards ourselves affect us, I presume, in the first instance, as leading us to anticipate benefit or injury from those who entertain such affections for us. But the knowledge that another loves or approves me does not end with exciting agreeable feelings. It has the other result of exalting my self-complacency, my vanity or pride. My sense of merit would be very feeble if the comparison I make between myself and others I did not believe to be also made by many of my fellow-men.

I must be permitted to repeat here the observation I have already made. What we call *secondary* passions may be secondary only in the order of time. I cannot test or predict the strength of any passion by measuring the force of antecedent feelings which were the condition of its development. I can only note and record subsequent developments—their kind and degree. The knowledge that I am superior to another man, or am thought superior, breeds a well-known sentiment, that bears (according to the sort of superiority conceived) various names, as vanity and self-complacency, pride or self-esteem. But the strength of my vanity and self-esteem could not be measured by antecedent feelings, which might nevertheless be a condition of them.

Digitized by Google

What we call the secondary passion grows, and develops, and modifies with the advancing intellect: feeling and knowledge expanding or varying together. This self-esteem becomes one of the most effective passions of mankind. It enters into our loftiest and meanest of moods; modifies with our loftiest or most petty purposes. The patriot feels it; the man devoted to his art or the discovery of truth feels it; the vain man displays it in its ridiculous aspect. Attached to one *character*, to such qualities which are or should be in some degree common to all members of a human society, it is that sentiment of self-approbation to which the moralist appeals, and which he does all in his power to foster and educate.

The sentiment of Moral Responsibility, about which there are so many debates, is a Thought and a Feeling. Try to separate the feeling, and we should have (at least in its simplest stage) some passion of fear, weak or strong as the case might be, but not in itself distinguishable from other fears. As reflection advances upon the relationship between the individual and society, the state of mind designated as that of Moral Responsibility advances or undergoes a change. I would observe that in what we call the sentiment of Duty, and honour so highly under that name, it is not the feeling *per se* that is so highly honourable to human nature: it is the intellectual development that elevates the feeling, and renders the whole state of mind we describe as sentiment of Duty so worthy of being extolled. Respect for the sentiment and its union with theology have induced many writers to invest it with peculiar mystery, but in a psychological point of view I see not why it should be more mysterious than other sentiments

Digitized by Google

—say than the sentiment of ambition. In both cases we see certain recognised passions or desires assuming an elevation by the importance to the whole society of the thoughts and purposes of which they form a part. Moral Responsibility in a child or savage is a very commonplace fear—fear of some chastisement, for breaking a law trivial in itself, and trivially apprehended. Afterwards there is fear of another kind, fear to lose the esteem of others or our own self-esteem, and a law of higher kind or more nobly apprehended.

Nothing has created more confusion than the tendency men have to take what is most exalted, or what is actually most authoritative in the human mind, as first in order as well as in importance; beginning in their history of the consciousness with the development which has latest risen to the place of supremacy. Many of our ethical perplexities are due to this inversion. What strange rhapsodies one sometimes hears about the sentiment of Justice or the sense of Desert! Some Minerva is born armed and in divine panoply from the brain of each of us. To the passionate man, the fellow-man who has injured him deserves—just all the vengeance he can inflict. That is what he would call the satisfaction of justice. It is the satisfaction of his revenge. Whether one man or twenty men give themselves this satisfaction, it is simply revenge. But to bystanders there are injuries of various degrees, and revenges of various kinds, and some measure or proportion between the injury and revenge grows up in the popular mind, and that shall be what the wrongdoer deserves. In the mind of the cultivated jurist the sentiment of Justice is still further modified. When

Digitized by Google

the society deliberately makes laws for the future conduct of its members, and fixes a penalty to the violation of them, the expectation arises that men will be governed by these laws, and that the *threat* of the penalty will be sufficient. At all events the proclaimed laws and the threat are in the first instance to be set before them. The punishment must be inflicted when the law is broken, else the threat would become a nullity. But the use of the punishment is to preserve the efficacy of the threat. Hence to the enlightened jurist an *ex post facto* becomes unjust. The proportion of the punishment to the crime ceases to satisfy him. The *law* has become to him the great and important fact. Have you tried to govern the man by due proclamation of the law with its penalty? If not, you may inflict revenge, you do not execute justice.

How manifest is it that the expansion of the intelligence of man has given rise to a new sentiment of justice. Instead of seeing everywhere intuitive sentiments of morality, I find my hope and encouragement, my good augury for society, in this great fact, that with increasing knowledge and wider thinking higher sentiments grow up. Thinking glows into passion. Note, as the forms of government change with the circumstances and intelligence of men, how the sentiments change also. The staunchest republican on earth must be utterly destitute of the spirit of philosophy if he has never noted with admiration how the sentiment of loyalty grows up in the monarchy—ennobling what to him may have seemed a sad necessity. I do not venture to prophesy the future of human society, but when some scheme is proposed of organizing

Digitized by Google

industry more directly for the benefit [of the working classes], and the objection is made that this supposes a new and more persistent sentiment of patriotism than the world has yet seen—the objection does not appear to me fatal. New social sentiments do arise with new thinking on social matters. It is the new thinking glowing into feeling. Half habit, half reflection, the new sentiment takes its place and does its work. What one notes at present is that the *Thinking* is so desperately imperfect—so fatally one-sided. One hears men shouting for their social and democratic government who have but one idea—that they, the shouters, are somehow to share more largely in the fruits of industry. We find the most ignorant and craving of mankind shouting for that which requires a lofty intelligence to comprehend, and the corresponding elevation of feeling to assist in bringing into practice.

III.

The sentiment of Duty leads us, we are accustomed to say, to the virtuous action; the sentiment of Merit is the reward for having performed it. What exactly are the conditions of this sense of merit? An old controversy, which *will* return upon us again and again, here intrudes itself. To feel that an action was meritorious, is not one condition this—that I recognise that I might or might not have performed it—that I performed it of my own free will? In an analysis of this sentiment I must glance again at this formidable controversy. All is not repetition that at first seems so. And there are subjects best treated by approaching them at intervals from slightly different points of view.

Digitized by Google

A persistent exhaustive method might only weary the attention.

Merit of a moral kind attaches indisputably to the purpose, the intention. Indeed, that can only be properly called a human action which was purposed, which flowed from a human consciousness. Any other action would be merely automatic. Perhaps a bygone purpose or purposes may have induced habits of such strength that little more may be observable in a given present action than the force of habit. But in such cases we tacitly refer the habit to such bygone purposes, and so bring it within the circle of our praise and blame.

Put the case that you have unintentionally been the instrument of procuring some benefit for another—you have no sense of merit in such an act—you repel the praise or the proffered gratitude. If you were weak enough to accept them, you would feel that you were practising a deceit, or tacitly confirming his deception. Or put the case, far more likely to occur, that you have unintentionally injured your neighbour, you acquit yourself of all blame—you have no sense of demerit. The act was not yours—you did not purpose it.

But certain moralists are not contented with this account of the matter. The act must not only be yours, but you must feel that you could have refrained from it if you pleased—that it was your free act. They admit that all the merit lies in the intention, but they see in the intention itself what they call a freedom; the essence of the will lies in the intention, and in the intention there is this freedom; and this sense of freedom is a condition of your sense of merit.

Digitized by Google

Now it is not a mere verbal dispute when I maintain that this choice, this sense of freedom to do *this* or *that*, lies in the very intellectual element of the consciousness. It is judgment, it is comparison, seen in the selection of our purpose. To give it this new name of will, is to give the name of a whole to a part. Will is properly the purpose *and* the action. As the purpose is so essential a part it draws the name to itself. But a purpose in itself is a combination of thought and feeling, or if we deliberate what shall be our purpose, this deliberation is itself a thought, or perhaps many thoughts, a series of comparisons and judgments.

I praise the act of an intelligent human being. If the act had not its origin in intelligence of some kind and degree, it is not a human act at all—I withdraw my praise. In this intelligence lies the choice, the freedom of which you are conscious. He does not *will* his intelligence—but his intelligence is that part of his will which constitutes it a human will. So much of clear vision as you have on the right hand and the left, so much of freedom have you.

"Very true," answers some controversialist; "it would be only a change of terms if I spoke of the freedom of the intelligence, instead of the freedom of the will—if it were not that you, like other psychologists, trace a certain development, according to law, of the human intelligence, which you also combine with the element of feeling, and that at all events makes its first appearance without any choice of ours. I want in the freedom of will that which carries a human soul out of and above the laws of nature. I don't find this arbitrariness in the intellect."

Digitized by Google

And I reply, with utmost candour, that such arbitrariness I cannot find in man, under any terms whatsoever. The choice that he has, which I say is his freedom and his intellect also, is a choice which represents the man's position at the moment. But the nature, the terms of that choice, *these* have come down to him from the past. Yes, I choose, I intellectually energize *thus*. But there are many kinds of choice. I may ask, What is wisest? What is best for me and for all? I may ask, What will yield me here and now the greatest pleasure? I may ask how best to obey a law, or merely how to escape from the penalty of its infraction? This must surely depend on the growth and cultivation of my mind during the past. I cannot suddenly rise to the elevation of the moralist, who desires so to live that in providing for his own happiness he promotes the happiness of others, or at all events does nothing prejudicial to the well-being of society. I know of no arbitrary power by which a man can suddenly rise to this elevation. He rose to it through much thinking, and thinking under many social influences.

When I deliberate, I feel that I can choose *this* or *that*. Such is the nature of deliberation. But the *this* or *that?* I did not conjure them up before my intellectual vision for the first time, and for or by this act of deliberation.

There is all along this intellectual energy of choice. We are conscious of it ourselves, and we do our utmost to keep it alive in others. On this efficacy of our praise and blame rests the moral duty of a right distribution of praise and blame. In this efficacy of our

Digitized by Google

punishments rests the justification of punishment itself, whenever we want any other justification than the passions of revenge and fear immediately supply.

But if this be so, the question recurs, How is it there is such a reluctance to admit so plain a statement? There must be something unexplained. Gravest authorities, and those who pass for profoundest moralists, repeatedly demand for man an arbitrariness that places him outside of the laws of nature, will not admit that his Choice itself is an intellectual act quite in accordance with a development according to law. It is not enough that he has this intellectual energy, which grows under social promptings and social restraints. It seems to me that I could not strike the man unless I knew him as the author of his own intellect and affection.

I have two observations to make here: To the unreflective or unscientific mind there is a certain delusion about this act of Choice. The judgment is abstracted from the terms. That concatenation of events and of our own cogitations and feelings, which has brought us to the present deliberation with such might and energy as we possess, is not present to us. Nothing perhaps is present but the act of judgment we have to perform, and it takes upon itself this arbitrary character.

But reflection exposes this delusion; why is it that we resist the correction? I apprehend that we should not be so willing to do so, if this first impression had not been incorporated with Theology, and with the punishments which Theology holds out.

We may be sure that no especial theory of punish-

Digitized by Google

ment was invented for theology. But theology is remarkably conservative; it changes, but it changes slowly; it carries into our age the teaching that originated probably in what was peculiar to a previous age.

Justice as administered by human tribunals is even now some mixture of vindictiveness and expediency. In ruder times the vindictiveness, under the name of retribution, was a very predominant element. And it becomes such in the punishments dealt out by Zeus, or whatever was the presiding deity.

When these punishments were transferred to another world—where they are now continued beyond the existence of human societies, and eternized there—it was too late to represent them as expedients for the improvement and advance of human society, or of any societies known to us. The punishment therefore stood forth in its retributive character, could justify itself in no other way.

The theological thinker had no other resource than to exaggerate the guilt of the culprit, and if possible to modify the nature of that guilt to suit the new expansion of criminal justice.

He fixed on this element of Choice. The man *chose* the crime, and in choosing the crime chose the punishment—dared or defied it.

The guilt itself was converted into the violation of a law—a God's law. And here again a certain natural tendency of thought was taken advantage of without applying the needful corrections. Obedience to the *rules* of morality, from its extreme importance, was and is very generally taken for morality itself. The essence

Digitized by Google

of morality lies in the "Love thy neighbour." "Be a source of happiness to others as well as to yourself." The rules of morality are the modes in which this "Love thy neighbour" can best be carried into effect. Such precepts however as, "Speak the truth," "Do not steal," and the like, become taught (and not unwisely) as absolute first precepts, and virtue is defined as acting in obedience to such precepts.

Matters stand thus :—There is a law. That law has been infringed, and a punishment quite irrespective of the wants or demands of the human society must follow. First, Virtue has become obedience to a law, then punishment follows on an infraction of the law. Abstractions are put in the place of human beings. The Calvinist rides off on these two abstractions; they are enough for him. But most men, seeing there is a punishment falls on the individual soul—as he stands there face to face with God (not as he is one of a social community with and for whom he must needs suffer and enjoy)—find themselves obliged to aggravate the criminality of the human being's *choice*. They say, Here was a free-will; the man could have obeyed—did *not* obey—therefore whose fault but his own? And from this positive ground they feel that they must not retreat.

In morality men have to judge each other. What is loveable and serviceable they praise. What is hateful and injurious they condemn. That follows inevitably from their own nature. Moreover, they soon learn that their praise and blame, their reward and punishment, ever fosters the loveable and represses the hateful. We are all judges, and all judged, and under the in-

Digitized by Google

fluence of an opinion that all contribute to, and that all are ruled by, the whole society grows; and if it does not advance, yet preserves what degree of excellence has been reached. If the individual, brought to the bar of this public opinion, should appeal against its judgment, on the ground that he—the hapless individual developed *according to law*—that he thought, judged, selected with such poor intelligence as had been accorded to him—that he was weak in knowledge and judgment, strong in passion or desire—the answer is at hand: he would be still weaker, and more incurable, if his fellow-men, with praise where they could give it, with blame where he went wrong, did not restrain and guide him. The love and hate of others was his strength, gave him shame and honour. Amongst the laws of his being to which he appeals is this—that he is a social creature—can develop only under the affections and judgments of his kind. He makes his appeal to law, and from the law he is answered. Society has just this solidarity.

In theology it is no longer society that judges, nor is the social man condemned, that either he or society may be the better for the judgment. It is an individual soul abstracted from the society that is put before the tribunal of God, his sin is to his Creator; and now if he tenders the plea, "I was made thus," what answer can be given to the plea? If listened to, it would stop the judgment; it cannot be listened to. The individual must be decreed to have been at all times able to act better than he did act, or the sentence is supposed to fail in justification.

It is thus, I apprehend, that our doctrine of free-will,

Digitized by Google

as we meet with it constantly sustained, is made to hold its ground. I am speaking, be it understood, of the doctrine of divine punishment as generally taught. There are not wanting symptoms of some change—tardy and reluctant—in theology. The jurist has long had one theory of punishment, the theologian another. This divergence cannot last for ever.

Would it not be wise to understand that the Creator punishes man through man and for the good of man? I think I see the curtain descending altogether on that terrible vista of the future, lit up with what already seem unholy fires. Not the torture of the individual soul—not vengeance in any shape—but the onward progress of a whole spiritual community;—this men begin to hold to be the divine purpose.

Choose well! That is the act ever before us, the last result to which we are pressing. Ill choices have been made, to the misery of the chooser and others. Press on, and choose better, and ever better.

Nor can any doctrine of law or necessity, whether we call it the nature of things or the ordinance of God, rationally intervene to quell the efforts or extinguish the purposes of man. He *does* think, purpose, choose,—this is his nature, though he thinks, purposes, and chooses at each moment on some condition of the past; he does this by an energy no one could positively predict, for the intellect of the man is the last appearance in the world, a faculty that has *come in*—that joins itself to the rest, is conditioned by the rest—but none but God knows what possible strength it may manifest. Fatalism, or a necessity known to us, there is not; there is a faculty of intelligence acting on conditions,

Digitized by Google

and as that faculty acts or not, will be results. But no science has limited the energy of this faculty.

Mr. Palgrave, when on a voyage with Mahometans, writes of them thus: "The Mahometans seemed thoroughly convinced that they were in the hands of an Absolute and Arbitrary Power, which might save them if it chose, or drown them if it chose, but on which their prayers or needs would have little or no effect."

Their prayers, probably not; but what of their efforts to save the ship? If the fatalism of the Mahometan went so far as this, that the result would be the same whatever the skill and labour of navigation, we are justified in calling such fatalism an absurdity. The efforts and activities of men (when we are considering human nature) are precisely the things determined by God. A creature stands before us who works thus, energizes thus; works on with sense of his own individuality; has this energy of intellect and choice, and must manifest it as long as he has conscious life.

If the advocates of free-will only demand the acknowledgment of an intellectual energy which none of us can sound or fathom, and which is the last gift from the hands of God, I for one have no controversy with them; that such energy must at each stage receive the condition, the terms on which it works, is also a truth which they perhaps, on their side, would feel bound to acknowledge.

IV.

There is yet a topic which cannot be omitted,—the influence of passion on belief. It seems to me that a

Digitized by Google

clear understanding of the great psychical qualities which constitute a human consciousness enables us to thread our way through those difficulties that surround the nature of Belief.

We cannot, as I often have to repeat, transcend our Intelligence and our Feelings. All thinking is originally belief; all object of thought is originally truth. There comes in a distinction between these objects and these thoughts. Our memory, even our senses, are found occasionally deceptive. When we have to anticipate the future, we make many an egregious mistake. The distinction between truth and falsehood enters, and enters to grow more and more important.

That which is distinguished as false should be, as such, banished from the mind; its distinction as false should be a pure exercise of judgment. But the judgment does not always give a clear decision, and meanwhile the passionate or emotional nature of a thought gives it standing-place. By reason of its emotion, it becomes the exciter of kindred or sustaining thoughts. Thus belief—which must always be the reception or no-reception of an idea according to this distinction of true or false—is no longer governed by the judgment only. The affections throw their weight into the scale.

Hence there grows up a second distinction between Belief and a conviction of the reason. Absolute truth knows of no degrees. Even a probability, if it can be mathematically calculated, takes the form of an absolute truth. But anticipations which are hopes and fears as well as judgments, are strong or feeble, admit—and Belief here admits—of degree, as strong or weak—be-

Digitized by Google

cause the passion that fastens them on us, that will not let them be dismissed, may be strong or weak.

Belief, when it is distinguished from pure intellectual assent, as when we distinguish Faith from Reason, marks a predominant presence of feeling or desire.

I shall perhaps be reminded here that there is an assent that comes from merely repeating what others have told us. A habit of this kind is conspicuous enough. But the habit acts so as to favour some judgment already made. *Mere repetition* of itself would not be a belief—it would not involve that distinction between true and false, probable or improbable, which lies at the basis of belief. If *I believe*, because another has told me, it is because I have more confidence in that person than in another person telling me the contrary, and on a belief thus founded habit may operate, which indeed operates on all things.

The influence of passion on belief is seen everywhere. It makes one thought a greater favourite than another thought, or fastens it there by the very emotion, though it may be painful and fearful. Then, when the question is asked, Is it true or not? are there not certain known truths, truths perhaps of the senses which contradict this thought, and forbid it to enter as a truth? —this overpowering influence of the emotion renders a calm judgment impossible. We say the voice of reason is stifled—is too weak to be heard.

If our estimate of another's character has gathered around it our love or hate, how hard it is for us to revise our judgment, and admit evidence that contradicts this estimate! If a future event, highly improbable, has, however, once excited a keen hope within us, how

Digitized by Google

reluctantly do we listen to any exposition of that improbability! We say the man has a strong belief, and very weak judgment.

But it must not be forgotten that truth and probability may also receive their support in our mind from the emotion they carry with them. And a passionate belief may be a true belief. In such cases a theologian would say—presuming his doctrines were the subject of discussion—that the man had both Reason and Faith.

And nowhere are the feelings observed more conspicuously than in our religious beliefs. It is Imagination that first leads us out of the circle of terrestrial objects, and the imagination would probably come and go, like a passing dream, if it did not awake some feeling of love and hate, of hope or fear. He who first whispered that there is a Father in the skies (and philologists trace back the conception to a very remote antiquity) was founding a new sentiment and new hope—a reverence due elsewhere, a protection to be looked for elsewhere. The feelings of a child to a parent found new scope: the adult was again a child, and had a Celestial Protector. He who first suggested that there might be in the skies, for the whole society, a Ruler and Avenger of crime, was founding a new Government for mankind. Here was a Judge not to be deceived, perhaps a Leader in battle not to be resisted. From time to time voices of dissent will arise—sceptical questionings—but the main result of these will be to give to such Imaginations the distinctive character of Beliefs. We *thought them*—possibly with the same spontaneity with which we saw this and that; your suggestion that they may be falsities only makes

Digitized by Google

us think them again, under the distinction of true and false, and declare that they are not falsities.

If to imagination succeeds some idea of the reason, or if the imagination itself is partly justified and partly modified by subsequent knowledge and reflection—it is still some passion or emotion which gives to assent that energy which exalts it to a Faith. Why should a thought recur again and again, or how could it influence our lives, if it were not a passion as well as a thought—if it had no bearing on human felicity? A truth to which we are entirely indifferent falls from us as an idle proposition. At least there is the passion of discovery, and the passion of dispute, or intellectual energy would flag.

Those who write the history of religion are constantly portraying to us the result of emotion in the belief and practices of the various nations of the earth, and they show how emotion acts upon thought, and thought again upon emotion. What was the first worship, when men went shouting through the woods, or clanging their cymbals underneath the impassive sky, but some sentiment of wonder in the presence of earth and heaven that they did not know how better to express?

But the vague sentiment of wonder, which probably came first and certainly lasts the longest, must soon have been followed by other sentiments. What a yearning we have to know the future! Was there nothing in heaven or earth that could tell us? was there no way of extorting the knowledge? So the oracle grew up, and the oracle was believed in, not because men had really tested the veracity of oracles, but because they evidently desired that there should be

Digitized by Google

oracles. It would have been a kind of profanity to make a statistical list of predictions that were true and predictions that were falsified, with a third column from those uttered in such ambiguities of language, that whether they were really verified or falsified it was impossible to say.

But the god can do more than reveal; he can give the victory. Or he can bring defeat and pestilence on the land. Fear is even more potent than hope in this matter of belief. To deny the god might anger him—supposing our denial a mistake, and he really existed all the while. Supposing there were nine hundred and ninety-nine chances in favour of the non-existence, and one only in the thousand in favour of the existence of some terrible demon—yet so long as there is room for a mistake, my tongue is paralysed, I tremble and believe.

We have noticed how passion grows in strength when shared by a crowd; and the passion-supported belief augments in the same proportion. We need not transcend the dusty arena of politics for an example of this. A national hatred brings with it national beliefs that are perfectly astounding to the cool-headed spectators. The violent patriot cannot recognise any goodness in the adversary of his country; to do so would be to cease to hate, or to cease to hate with due patriotic virulence. Our neighbours the Irish, or I should rather say one class of Irishmen, hate England, hate the English rule, hate every statesman that would uphold it. He may labour most strenuously for the good of Ireland, strive in every way to be just and beneficent—it avails nothing; he is hated, and therefore his justice

Digitized by Google

is a disguised fear, and his benevolence a mere treachery. There is no help for it.

It is well known that on religious subjects a specific argument has been deduced for the truth of a proposition from the excellent results of believing it true, or from the desirableness that it should be true. It is so desirable to be immortal, why not therefore? It is so desirable, so many have thought, that there should be a Judge to mete out rewards and punishments according to the merits and demerits of men—and what is seen to be so wise, must it not be? This kind of argument may have its place. Having established the existence of a Benevolent and Omnipotent Creator, we may adopt, of two suppositions equally open to us, that one which is in accordance with such established belief. But in general we must remember that we come to the universe to *learn what is;* what *we* should think wisest is hardly a rule for the universe.

But whatever logicians may determine about the *argument*, the *desire* for immortality is indisputably the great foundation for a belief in it. Awake that desire and cultivate yourself for a specific form of immortal happiness, and the faith is secure. And men more especially distinguish this as a *faith*. They do not say that it is against Reason: far from it; but they are conscious that it is mainly upheld by Feeling.

Having thus seen the elasticity and growth of human passion—following, in short, human knowledge and change of outward circumstances—we are somewhat better prepared to enter on a survey of the past with some hope of dimly foreseeing the future.

Digitized by Google

MEMOIR.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"It is quite in vain that critics and readers both constantly repeat that the biography of a man of letters is almost always unentertaining, and that we could hardly expect it to be otherwise. Whatever it is we expect, or have any just reason for expecting, there is an incurable curiosity to know something of *the man* wherever *the writer* has succeeded in interesting us. The case stands thus: we have a living human being revealing himself to us by his thoughts, and by nothing else. Something to fill up the blank we inevitably crave. We have here an object of esteem, perhaps of some degree of veneration, and yet our hero remains obstinately invisible; even to the mind's eye utterly obscure. We desire that he take human form, and be seen moving amongst the realities of life; we desire that he stand out before us somewhat distinctly in the imagination.

"Other great men, the man of action, the great captain, the great statesman, write their lives in their deeds; the very career which ennobles or distinguishes them is also their biography. We see them in their

Digitized by Google

actions. Their lives, too, are written in the history of their country, and they hardly need a separate memorial. With the man of letters it is otherwise. He has written a book, and placed it there on the desk before us. The hand that placed it there is unseen. Unless some friend will tell us, we can know nothing of the destiny of this man. He comes before us as the thinker only: he had these thoughts, but where? under what circumstances? He also lived, enjoyed, or suffered. It may be a commonplace story, but in this instance we must have the commonplace."

These are words of your own, my beloved; and I appeal to their sanction as I prepare to write out my glimpses of your early life, my memories of the later years during which it was intertwined with mine. I am not writing for the public—a task you held unsuited to a wife, requiring a more impartial judgment than her love and sorrow could exercise. I only try to write for the inner circle of friends who desire to know how you came to be what you were, and to hold the opinions you held. I cannot, indeed, tell them much, yet there is no other who can tell them so much. For you used to say that you had let me look you through and through; and whenever you adverted, ever so lightly, to your past, I gathered up your words and stored them in my heart. L. C. S.

Digitized by Google

MEMOIR.

THAT must have been a happy home at North-End, Hammersmith, into which, during the January of 1808, William Henry Smith was born, the youngest of a large family. His father, a man of strong natural intelligence, having early made a fortune sufficient for his wants, early retired from business, in consequence mainly of an asthmatic tendency, which had harassed him from the age of thirty. The impression I gained of him from his son's description was that of one peculiarly fond of quiet and of books, but whose will gave law to his household, and was uniformly seconded by the loving loyalty of his wife. The large family had a recognised *Head*, a condition I have often heard my husband insist upon as essential to all healthy domestic life. Whatever the spirits of the children might prompt, it was an understood, a *felt* law, that "Papa's" tastes and habits must be respected. And these, being interpreted by so gentle a mother, were never viewed in the light of unreasonable restraints. This dear mother seems to have been a woman of a quite primitive type, full of silent piety, wrapped up in the home and the family. She was of partly German extraction, her mother had been an eminently saintly

Digitized by Google

character, and I have caught glimpses too of a grandfather devoted to the study of Jacob Boehme, whose folio volumes, and the tradition of the veneration in which they had been held, still existed in the Hammersmith home.

How often, by the divination of love and sorrow, I have tried to conjure up that home before my mind! My husband once took me to its site, but the good old house had been cut up into shops, and the large garden was all gone,—the large garden, that had seemed so large to the happy child playing there by the hour "under the scarlet and purple blossoms of the fuchsias," under the benignant eye too of a well-remembered old servant, gardener and groom, who kept the plants and the sleek discreet horse "Papa" drove in his gig, in equal order. It was an every-day delight to play in that garden, a high privilege to ride in that gig. I think I can see the father, very tall, a little worn by asthma, with black eyes of peculiar, piercing power, and a certain stateliness and natural dignity which were wont to receive from officials at public places a degree of deference, noticed with some amusement by the little observant companion and sight-seer. What *he* must have been at an early age the miniature photographed on the first page will best show. No wonder that, as his eldest surviving sister affectionately recalls, "he was the pet of both parents," though his exceeding mobility did sometimes a little agitate the valetudinarian father, who would lay down a half-crown on the table and say, "William, you shall have it, if you will only sit still for ten minutes!" A child with such an expression as the picture shows would surely

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

have complied had it been any way possible; but he did not remember that the half-crown was ever won. One day, when he was very small, a canary bird belonging to a sister died, and was buried beneath a flower-bush in the garden; and on that occasion, when the bright and restless creature lying suddenly motionless on the palm of some young hand had given the happy child his first experience of wondering sadness, he wrote his first verses. There is no one but me who recalls the trifling incident,—me, to whom nothing that ever befell him can be a trifle! I always felt a sacred interest in hearing him spontaneously revert to this joyous period. It was not very often that he did so; to speak of himself at all was unusual with him; but in his writings one not unfrequently comes upon passages akin in spirit to the one I am about to transcribe from a review of Jean Paul, which he wrote in the summer of 1863:—

"All men delight, as Richter himself observes, in far-reaching recollections of their days of childhood. He proceeds to assign two reasons for this: 'That in this retrospect they press closer to the gate of life, guarded by spiritual existences;' and secondly, 'That they hope in the spiritual fervour of an earlier consciousness to make themselves independent of the little contemptible annoyances that surround humanity.' This is going very far for a reason; a better might be found nearer home, in the simple pleasure of the tender and other emotions that we feel at the revived image of our miniature self. Mr. Bain, in his late admirable treatise on the Emotions, has described a form of our passions which he calls self-pity, a tender yearning over

Digitized by Google

one's-self—the same kind of pathetic sentiment which we feel for another, and which, indeed, is first elicited by some other person, and afterwards indulged in towards ourself. We look upon ourself as worthy of commiseration, or else of congratulation. We sympathize, in fact, with that self which is thrown before us as an object of contemplation. In no case is this species of sentiment so distinctly felt as when we conjure up the self of childhood. We weep—not its tears again, but tenderly over the little sorrows that brought them; we laugh—not again the laughter of childhood, but we laugh over its laughter, till the eyes fill again with other tears. The image that rises up in the memory, though recognised as ourself, is yet so different from this present recollecting and reflecting self, that we are capable of loving it, praising, chiding, laughing over it, with the same freedom as if it were some other person we were thinking of. We feel a charming egotism when we record the feats of childhood; we sympathize with the boastfulness of the little boaster; the vanity is not our own. We feel no shame at reviving its sallies of passion; we, the mature judge, pardon the little ignorant culprit. Whatever feelings in the course of our life have been elicited towards children, centre upon *this child*, which also was ourself. We travel hand in hand with it, like the guardian angel in the picture-books, looking down with grave, sweet, half-puzzled smile; only, in the picture-books, the angel guides the child, and here the child is leading the graver angel where it lists, stooping now for a flower, or striking out hopelessly after the too swift and vagrant butterflies."

Digitized by Google

Here is another glimpse of the enjoyments of those early days. The cheerful drawing-room in the Hammersmith home had a window at both ends. Round the one that looked into the garden clustered the white blossoms or hung the luscious fruit of a surpassing pear-tree—a swan-egg—the like of which was never met in later years! From the other window the children could watch the following spectacle, which my husband evidently enjoyed recalling in a notice of Mr. Knight's Reminiscences, published in 1864 :—

"Very pleasant is this looking back over a period of history through which we too have lived. Give a boy a telescope, and if he is far enough away from home, the first or the greatest delight he has in the use of it is to point it back to the house he lives in. To see the palings of his own garden, to see his father at work in it, or a younger brother playing in it, is a far greater treat than if you were to show him the coast of France or any other distant object. And so it is with the past in time. If the telescope of the historian brings back to us events through which we have lived, and which were already fading away in the memory, he gives to us quite a peculiar pleasure. . . .

"This great revolution in our mode of travelling, the substitution of the steam-engine for the horse, will soon be a matter of history, and older men will begin to record, with that peculiar zest which belongs to the recollection of youth, the aspect which the highway roads leading out of London presented in *their time.* The railway-train rushing by you at its full speed is sublime!—it deserves no timid epithet. You stand perhaps in the country, on one of those little bridges

Digitized by Google

thrown over the line for the convenience of the farmer, who would else find his fields hopelessly bisected. A jet of steam is seen on the horizon, a whir of a thousand wheels grows louder and louder on the ear,—and there rushes under your feet the very realization of Milton's dream, who saw the chariot of God, instinct with motion, self-impelled, thundering over the plains of heaven. You look round, and already in the distant landscape the triumphal train is bearing its beautiful standard of ever-rising clouds, white as the highest that rest stationary in the sky, and of exquisitely involved movement. For an instant the whole country is animated as if by the stir of battle: when the spectacle has quite passed, how inexpressibly flat and desolate and still have our familiar fields become! Nothing seems to have a right to exist that can be so still and stationary. Yet grand as this spectacle is, we revert with pleasure to some boyish recollections of the highroad, and to picturesque effects produced by quite other means. We are transported in imagination to a bay-window that commanded the great western road —the Bath Road, as people at that time often called it. Every evening came, in rapid succession, the earth tingling with the musical tread of their horses, seven mail-coaches out of London. The dark-red coach, the scarlet guard standing up in his solitary little dickey behind, the tramp of the horses, the ring of the horns—can one ever forget them? For some miles out of London the guard was kept on his feet, blowing on his horn, to warn all slower vehicles to make way for his Majesty's mails. There was a turnpike within sight of us; how the horses dashed through it! with not the least abate-

Digitized by Google

ment of speed. If some intolerable blunderer stopped the way, and that royal coachman had to draw up his team, making the splinter-bars rattle together, we looked upon it as almost an act of high treason. If the owner of that blockading cart had been immediately led off to execution, we boys should have thought he had but his deserts. Our mysterious seven were still more exciting to the imagination when, in the dark winter nights, only the two vivid lamps could be seen borne along by the trampling coursers. No darkness checked the speed of the mail; a London fog, indeed, could not be so easily vanquished; but even the London fog which brought all ordinary vehicles to a stand-still could not altogether subdue our royal mails. The procession came flaring with torches, men shouting before it, and a man with a huge link at the head of each horse. It was a thrilling and a somewhat fearful scene."

The first sorrow that left a trace on my husband's remembrance was the going to school, at the age, I think, of eight or nine. He did not go far indeed, but to the sensitive and much-petted child, the change from the atmosphere of love and joy that filled his home was simply appalling. He was sent to a clergyman of the name of Elwal, and found himself surrounded by a good many older boys, who appeared to him—and probably were—boisterous and brutal. At all events the little fellow, to whom the Bible his mother so loved was the most sacred of all things, could not read it, could not kneel night and morning beside his little bed, without jeers and taunts and rough dissuasives. He only read and prayed the more resolutely. The unflinching spirit that throughout life followed after

Digitized by Google

truth at any cost, was even then awake in the lonely and sorrowful child. Then, too, the comparatively coarse fare, the inevitable fat, for which he had a constitutional loathing, somewhat impaired his health. Yet he probably kept back—with the strange reticence that belongs to childhood—the full amount of his unhappiness, or he would never have been left at this school; and no doubt, too, school-life to one so quick to learn, so active in play, must also have had a pleasant side. Still the memory of those days never failed to awake in him the pathetic yearning, the *self-pity*, to which allusion has been made in a preceding extract. He was always sorry for the "miniature self" placed under Mr. Elwal's care.

The next school to which he went was in every way a contrast. Mr. Elwal taught well, but disregarded—as was indeed almost universal at that time—the material comforts of his pupils. At Radley, near Abingdon, the latter were well attended to, but the standard of learning was not high. But the two years or so spent there were always cheerfully adverted to. It might jar the High Church susceptibilities of the present inmates of Radley Hall to know that early in the century it was a Dissenting school—the head-master a Dissenter, who seemed to have little vocation for his office beyond failure in some former business! However, he had a fair staff of masters and an amiable, popular wife, who liked William Smith to drive with her in her little pony-carriage, which he appeared to have liked too. In fact, at Radley—so far as I could discern—he did nothing but what he liked. A religious profession was in the ascendant there, would

Digitized by Google

have insured approval; one is not therefore surprised to find that the feeling of devotion, which opposition had only stimulated, now retired out of sight. He very soon learnt all that the masters could teach him, was at the head of the school (a distinction which, he carefully impressed upon me, implied but mediocre scholarship), and had his time almost entirely at his own disposal. Radley was then a noble but still unfinished house, standing in beautiful grounds. There was one room especially fine in its proportions, with rows of stately pillars, and looking into the park—a room originally destined for a library, but almost unfurnished, and with a scanty choice of books—and this room was the boy's favourite and undisturbed resort. And among the few volumes it contained he found Byron! And pacing up and down that pillared room, book in hand, the potent spell wrought in the young poetic heart. No sketch of his youth could be faithful that omitted this Byronic phase. He has often described its sufferings to me, but I prefer to give them in words of his own, written in 1864. Throughout the long series of his articles on various subjects I can trace occasional allusions to this morbid influence:—

"The youth of the last age were battling blindly and passionately against fate, were full of gloomy mysteries, great devotees to beauty, which after all was but to them the rainbow in a storm which they thought might abate, but which never ceased,—rainbow always upon clouds which broke up only to re-unite in darker masses,—rainbow of beauty, *not* of hope, incongruous apparition in a troubled and chaotic world.

Digitized by Google

"Our Byronic fever had more than one phase; sometimes it exhibited itself in a mere moody fantastical misanthropy, combined with a reckless pursuit of very vulgar pleasure; but in a less numerous and more meditative order of minds it displayed itself in a morbid passionate discontent with themselves as with all others. These were not pleasure-seekers, they had a great scorn for human life." . . . . It is needless to point out to which of these two classes the writer could ever have belonged.

But although the first reading of Byron's poetry dated as far back as the two years spent at Radley school, it was later that the Byronic spirit was fully developed. Certainly the germ must have lain dormant during the brief and happy period that the boy passed at Glasgow College (1821-22). He was young to go there—only fourteen; but an elder brother—his favourite brother Theyre, a keen logician even then, and remarkable for worth and charm as well as intellect—was at that time a student at Glasgow, and it seemed desirable that William, who had evidently absorbed what of learning Radley could afford, should share higher advantages under his brother's care.

He always remembered this session at Glasgow with peculiar interest, and more than once described to me the passage from London to Leith, made in foggy weather (in a sailing vessel of course), the impressions received on landing, the introduction to Scotch collops, and the ambrosial sweetness of the first glass of Edinburgh ale! A clever student (now a bishop) shared the lodgings of the two brothers; John Sterling was one of their intimate associates, and much eager conversing and debat-

Digitized by Google

ing went on, to which I cannot doubt that the boy contributed many an apposite illustration and subtle argument. His elder brother in one of his home letters writes:—"William and I have no 'ennui;' we are closely engaged, and when threatened with a lowness of spirits we can manage between us to conjure up some ludicrous image, to make a joke out of something, and relieve ourselves with a feat of hilarity. It is no bad thing, I can assure you, to have brains enough even to play the fool."

It was now that for the first time William Smith fell in with Scotch metaphysics, that—to use his own words in talking over the subject with me—"*he got thinking.*" As a consequence, the old theological foundations became gradually disturbed, at first perhaps insensibly, for his supreme enjoyment was still found in hearing Dr. Chalmers preach. That fervent eloquence always remained one of his most vivid memories. At the time I write of, the three friends and fellow-students were all Dissenters, but my husband was the only one of them who throughout life not only firmly adhered in theory to the Voluntary system,[1] but as a matter of taste preferred the simple Presbyterian service. The large family in the Hammersmith home were indeed in

[1] Nevertheless I give a little anecdote which I owe to my husband's gifted brother-in-law, Mr. Weigall, to prove that long before the Glasgow days, at a very early age indeed, William Smith could look upon both sides of a question. "His brother Theyre," writes Mr. Weigall, "always predicted to me his future distinction. I remember his mentioning as an evidence of his quickness that when he (Theyre) was driving him in a little pony-carriage of rather fragile-looking construction, kept chiefly for the use of his sisters, William said to him, 'I don't like riding in this thing. I never feel secure. I always feel as if I were being supported by voluntary contributions.'"

Digitized by Google

the habit of attending the parish church once a day—the father had the old-fashioned Church-and-King reverence,—but it was in the Independent chapel that the younger members had their strongest emotions roused. It is easy to trace the influence of early associations in the passage I am about to extract from a notice of Sheridan Knowles, written by my husband in the summer of 1863:—

"If a French actor or Italian opera-singer retires from the stage to a convent of La Trappe, there to dig his own grave in silence and seclusion, we hasten to throw around the incident a halo of poetry. If we do not altogether admire and applaud, we stand aside in submissive, respectful attitude; we look in mute amazement at this man who is so palpably forsaking earth for heaven. No poetry hovers over the Dissenting meeting-house. Neither the pew nor the pulpit of the Baptist chapel presents anything attractive to the imagination. Good Protestants as we are, we sympathize more readily with the *Trappist* than with the less ardent but surely more rational devotion that takes shelter in the walls of the little *Bethel*. Yet this should not be. In reality that little Bethel may be the scene of a pious enthusiasm as remarkable as any that demonstrates itself, under more poetic circumstances, in the convent of La Trappe. We have but to throw ourselves into the heart of the true worshipper, and the most unsightly edifice of brick and mortar that ever glared on us from the dusty street of a provincial town will become invested with a poetry of the highest order. See the well-regulated methodical tradesman enter such a building. Leaving the cares and gains of

Digitized by Google

the week behind him, he walks at the head of his family up the narrow passage, which we will not call the aisle; he needs no verger to usher him into his seat; his hand reaches over to the familiar button that fastens the door of his pew; he opens the door, lets in wife and children, then establishes himself in his accustomed corner. He deals out from some secret depository—perhaps from a drawer under the seat—the Bibles and the Hymn-books, calf-bound, and the oldest of them not a little soiled and dog-eared. These he distributes, and then prepares for the morning devotion. One great sentiment he more or less distinctly recognises—the sentiment which, differently modified, constitutes the essence of religion in all churches and in all hearts, that he and his family are then and there doing homage to the Lord of all, are pledging themselves to obedience to whatever is just, and wise, and good, because His ways are perfect, and He requires of us, His rational creatures, what poor attempts at perfection we can make. After some interval of silence, a man, in spotless black coat and white neckcloth, rises from the deal pulpit opposite, a square deal box, with a reading-desk to it, which desk has no other ornament or furniture than the one large book, on which the minister reverently lays his hand. That one book sanctifies the whole place. Take that away, and all is dirt and dinginess. But our man in the corner of his pew could tell you that from that central spot there has emanated, he knows not how, a subtle influence that has pervaded the whole building, so that its very plastered walls are sacred to him. There is a knot in the unpainted wood-work of his pew on which his eye

Digitized by Google

has often rested as he followed the worthy preacher. Were our man to travel, and to be absent in foreign kingdoms, that knot in a piece of soiled deal would rise before his imagination, and suggest holy memories to him. His hand would be again on the button of that pew, and he would prepare himself for solemn meditations. Oh, believe us, the poetry comes from within. A lady kneels upon her *prie-dieu* before an altar, covered with glittering candlesticks and flowers, and lights and tapestry—kneels there under the carved roof which echoes with marvellous music; so let her kneel, if her heart worships better in that fashion; but all the array of æsthetic symbolism will be unmeaning to her as the upholstery of her own drawing-room, unless she can bring to it that very poetry which our sober tradesman has contrived to throw over a wooden pew, polished only by his own elbows."

To return to the youthful Glasgow student. Perhaps nothing can convey so accurate an idea of what he was at this early age as a letter written in most delicate and legible characters to one of his elder sisters. In it we already see something of that blending of thought and feeling, of self-control and reflectiveness with spontaneity, which distinguished the man. It shows, too, how happy and loving was the home circle he was nurtured in,—a circle, I have heard him say, of which no member permitted him or her self an uncourteous tone or the disrespect of personal comment towards any other. There was a latent fire in the dark eyes of all, and a tacit conviction prevailed that such a liberty would be resented. I copy the letter verbatim. It was written in the summer of 1822:—

Digitized by Google

"My dear Esther,—I surely need not tell you with how much pleasure Selina's letter was received. Need I say, I shall be glad to see you all. With how much pleasure I look forward to the happy time, how many fond anticipations, and how many expectations I indulge! You have lately felt all these, and know them well; but you cannot tell the change my mind has undergone before the arrival of that joy-bearing letter. I had been 'making up' my mind to spend my summer at Glasgow, and perhaps part of that summer alone. I say 'making up,' for it was a kind of process, and one rather tedious and difficult. For, as I told my dear mamma, the thought would often come with great force—'how I should like to see them all!' Now this would greatly retard the process, and therefore I set strict watch over my thoughts; and when they rambled to North End, I checked them, after a very short indulgence, for fear they should end in a desire to visit that happy corner. It has set all in a flame. Those smothered feelings burst forth—hope and expectation shine with double lustre—all is light and gladness. And shall I see you all so soon? Yes, I shall, I shall!

"This is the first time I have stopped to take breath since I began this letter, for, whenever the subject of home comes across my mind, it imparts such an impulse that there is no resisting it. Perhaps it has carried me on with precipitation in this case. Sometimes it crosses my path while I am taking a walk, and then it is sure to make me take extraordinary long steps, or make fantastic leaps. In short, wherever it comes, it gives an irresistible stimulus, which no gravity can withstand and no will restrain. But gently! gently, my pen!

"There is one little circumstance I cannot help mentioning. When Theyre had perused the letter, and knew how the contents would please me, he put on a grave look, and, with a solemn manner, read to me that part which contained the news. The contrast was very great, for, while he was standing in this solemn manner, I was laughing and wriggling about the chair, as though bewitched.—Well then, you may expect us the first week in August, at the latest; and glad shall I be when that week comes, for I do so want to see you all.

Digitized by Google

"No doubt it will give you pleasure to hear that Theyre has carried off the first prize in the Logic class. There are in every class a certain number of prizes given, and they are distributed according to the votes of the students. Theyre obtained his unanimously. He also was successful in a prize essay. I must also tell you that the Greek Professor gave me one for two or three poetical translations I wrote. There is no little ceremony in distributing them, but I will not trouble you with that.

"How many circumstances are there which are constantly directing our thoughts to that place where our affections are placed! The most trifling thing will sometimes carry us away many miles, and detain us there for a long time. The other day, as I was demonstrating a proposition (for I am attending a little to mathematics), I happened to put the lid of the case of instruments upon my compass, and, twirling it round, it made a noise like a rattle. This rattling immediately reminded me of Mayfair; it was but a step to North-End, and, when once you have set your foot there, you know how many difficulties to take it away again. Well, some time after I found myself looking intently on the proposition, and holding the compass and the case on it in my hand, but quite ignorant of what I was doing. I seemed to have been roused from a vision." . . .

Then follow messages of love to the different members of the family, and a little significant postscript: "You promise you won't keep me!" which proves how much the College life was appreciated.[1] But though

[1] My husband throughout life entertained a very decided preference for the Scotch system of mental training. I may illustrate this by some observations of his in an article, written in 1855, on the Life of Lord Metcalfe. That distinguished man, as a young Oxonian, professed to "abhor metaphysics," and in his journal prayed to be delivered from "the abominable spirit" of reliance on reason as a guide,—"*blessed reason*," as he in irony termed it:—

"One cannot help remarking that a Scotch youth of the same age might be equally pious, equally steadfast in his faith, and perhaps more conversant with the several articles of his creed, but he never would have expressed the tenacity of his convictions in this manner,

Digitized by Google

he did return at the commencement of the next session, a sharp attack of inflammation of the lungs soon led to his being sent away home, and in the January of 1823 his father died, at the age of sixty-three.

And now came many changes, all of them fraught with pain. There was the loss of the indulgent father, the spectacle of the mother's meek, deep-seated grief, the break-up of the cheerful home, and in addition there was the closing of the College career—for the climate of Glasgow was pronounced too severe to be safely returned to; and the youth in whose secret soul the problems of the metaphysician and the visions of the poet were already seething, found himself destined to an uncongenial calling—that of the Law. "He was articled," I quote from a letter of Mr. Weigall's, "to Mr. Sharon Turner, the Anglo-Saxon historian, who was by profession an attorney; but the office routine was so distasteful to him that he soon solicited Mr. Turner to cancel his articles, but Mr. Turner told him he did not feel justified in doing so, as he did not consider William at that time the best judge of what was expedient for him. William dragged through the weary hours he was required by his agreement to spend

never would have spoken of 'blessed reason' ironically. . . . His first and last boast would have been that his faith was the perfection of reason. A Scotch lad, who had only breathed the air of Glasgow, or of Edinburgh, would have never shrunk from intellectual contest, or professed that the creed he held and cherished was not in perfect harmony with the truly *blessed reason.* He would as soon have thought of proclaiming himself a lunatic in the public streets, and avowing a preference for a slight shade of insanity. Such distinction we cannot help noticing between the systems of education in England and Scotland; but we have no intention of pursuing the subject, or drawing any laboured comparison between their respective merits."

Digitized by Google

in Mr. Turner's office, and has often told me they were the most tedious and profitless in his existence." When it is remembered, too, that at this early age necessity was laid upon the earnest seeker after truth to loose from the old moorings, and put forth, he alone,—he—so loving, so sensitive, so considerate of the feelings of others—alone on what *then* seemed "a dim and perilous way," one towards which, at all events, no member of his home ever so much as glanced,—it need excite no surprise that he viewed this period of his youth as profoundly unhappy. He would occasionally revert to it, but I never encouraged any reminiscence that cast a shadow over his spirits. I feel, however, that the following passage from one of his early works sprang from personal experience :—

"It generally happens that the external influences of daily scene and customary actions oppose their timely resistance to the desponding humour of our early days. But in my own case the outward scene of life was such as to foster and encourage it. The encroaching disposition became sole possessor of my mind. The ivy grew everywhere. It spread unhindered on my path, it stole unchecked upon my dwelling, it obscured the light of day, and embowered the secluded tenant in a fixed and stationary gloom. . . . In this moody condition of my soul, every trifling disgust, every casual vexation, though disregarded of themselves, could summon up a dismal train of violent and afflicting meditations. The first disturbance, the first ripple on the surface, soon indeed subsided, but, to take an illustration from some fairy tale I have read, the pebble was thrown upon enchanted waters, and it roused the gloomy and

Digitized by Google

tempestuous genius that lay scarce slumbering beneath them." . . .

Yet nothing could be more true than that "his misanthropy injured no one but its owner." Such was the sweetness of his nature, and his equitable recognition of the claims of others, that I doubt if his devoted mother, or any one of the home-circle "to whose hilarity he conspicuously contributed," ever suspected that beneath such a sunlit, smiling surface any gloomy genius whatsoever dwelt and stirred. A lady, however, who in her character of acquaintance may have observed more accurately than relatives, who often stand too near to see, describes him at this period as "most gentle and gracious, but seemingly quite apart from the rest in his dreamy, gentle way." She adds: "Looking at his face, one could only think of the wonderful depth and intellect of his eyes—this was something marvellous."

And now comes a period of which I can give scarce any account, for to my husband, whose life had long been one of abstract thinking—*impersonal*, one might almost say—any attempt at recalling *dates* was distinctly painful; and I, while gladly garnering any crumbs that fell for me from his past, was aware that he could not, even had he tried, reconstruct it consecutively. But I know that he lived with a most tender mother—a mother in whose eyes whatever William did was right—to whom his very leaving off attending church and chapel, though it might have disturbed her in the case of others, could not seem wrong. I know that his first visit to Switzerland—first sight of the Lake of Lucerne and the glories of

Digitized by Google

the mountains—was paid during an early period of youth, while there was on him that misanthropic Byronic mood, in which, to use his own words, "a love and enthusiasm for nature was a compensation for want of cordial sympathy with man, not a related feeling strengthened by and strengthening that sympathy."

When exactly that mood passed away for ever I cannot determine; but in his earliest productions it is already looked back upon as from a distance. I will finally dismiss it in two passages of his own:—

"He who has read, and felt, and risen above the poetry of Byron, will be for life a wiser man for having once been thoroughly acquainted with the morbid sentiments which there meet with so full and powerful an expression. And so variously are we constituted, that there are some who find themselves best roused to vigorous and sound thinking by an author with whom they have to contend. There are who can better quiet their own perturbed minds by watching the extravagances of a stronger maniac than themselves, than by listening to placid strains, however eloquent. Some there are who seem destined to find their entrance into philosophy, and into its calmest recesses, through the avenue of moody and discontented reflection." And: "It is a sort of moral conversion when a youthful mind turns from a too exclusive admiration of Byron's genius to the pages of Wordsworth." This conversion in my husband's case took place early.

I have heard him say that during his youth he was a quite rapacious reader of English and French literature. All the dramatists, all the essayists, all the historians of both countries, in addition to their philoso-

Digitized by Google

phical writers,—nothing came amiss to him, and if the day seemed long in the lawyer's office, the nights flew in eager study. It was his custom to sit up till three or four. The dear mother must have had many an anxious thought as to the effects of such a practice on so sensitive and fragile a frame, but she never seems to have interfered, even by tender remonstrance, with her son's perfect liberty. I extract a passage of his (written in 1847) which is evidently the expression of a personal experience :—"The student's lamp was burning ; how calm, how still is the remote and secluded chamber! . . . Reflection has her emotions, thrilling as those of passion. He who has not closed his door upon the world, and sat down with books and his own thoughts in a solitude like this, may have lived, we care not in how gay a world, or how passionate an existence, he has yet an excitement to experience, which, if not so violent, is far more prolonged, deeper and more sustained than any he has known—than any which the most brilliant scenes or the most clamorous triumphs of life can furnish. What is all the sparkling exhilaration of society, the wittiest and the fairest, what all the throbbings and perturbations of love itself, compared with the intense feeling of the *youthful thinker* who has man, and God, and eternity for his fresh contemplations, who for the first time perceives in his solitude all the grand enigmas of human existence lying unsolved about him. His brow is not corrugated, his eye is not inflamed; he sits calm and serene; a child would look into his face and be drawn near to him; but it seems to him that on his beating heart the very hand of God is lying."

Digitized by Google

One is not surprised to find that to the life of the lawyer and the student William Smith before long added that of the writer. I learn from his brother-in-law, Mr. Weigall, that "his first effort in print was a series of papers, under the head of the 'Woolgatherer,' published in the *Literary Gazette*, which he, John Sterling, and Maurice undertook to revive from its then moribund condition." "Sterling's father," writes Mr. Weigall, "the 'Thunderer' of the *Times*, called on me shortly after one of these papers (a dissertation on the Character of Hamlet) was published, to congratulate me on the impression it had produced. I remember his saying that 'such pure and elegant English had not been written since the days of Addison.' The *Gazette* became such a success that it was more than they could manage, as neither of them were inclined or able to undertake commercial cares and responsibilities, and they were very willing to listen to overtures made to them by Colburn the publisher to take it off their hands, which he did, and the *Gazette* was thenceforth merged in the *Athenæum*."

This incident I never heard my husband allude to. There are two lines of Arthur Clough's which William Smith might have taken for his motto throughout life. They contain the very essence of his character:—

> "Things so merely personal to myself
> Of all earth's things do least affect myself."

Success or approbation, such as he would have dwelt on with pleasure if falling to the lot of another, never seemed so much as recognised in connexion with himself. He shrank from praise more sensitively

Digitized by Google

than from censure. The latter he could at least appropriate.

From Mr. Weigall I learn too that "the reputation he acquired by these papers led to his being urged to join the Union Debating Society." "I accompanied him," Mr. Weigall writes, "more than once to the Union debates. I remember one occasion especially, on which John Stuart Mill was in the chair. There were present on that evening Mr. Roebuck, Mr. H. L. Bulwer (afterwards Lord Dalling), Mr. Romilly (the present Lord), Sir Henry Taylor (author of 'Philip van Artevelde'), and William. . . . I never on any other occasion heard such an eloquent debate. William spoke chiefly in reply to Sir H. Taylor—very forcibly, but not with his usual gentleness."

Of the first poems that he published, 'Guidone' and 'Solitude,' my husband tells the fate in 'Thorndale,' through the lips of Luxmore. He really did dig a hole in the garden and bury the unsold copies in the earth! How full of beautiful passages each of these poems is, a rapid glance even suffices to show, but they are too subjective and perhaps too sad to please widely. The abnormally introspective habit of thought that at this early period secretly tortured one—then, as always, exceptionally free from self-reference in speech or action—is too infrequent to awaken general interest. The same may be said of his first prose work, 'Ernesto: a Philosophical Romance,' written much about this time, but only published in 1835 as the last volume of 'The Library of Romance,' edited by Leitch Ritchie. It was with some difficulty that I prevailed upon him to give me a copy of this early production, the very

Digitized by Google

story of which he had utterly forgotten, and never cared to glance over. Immature he no doubt was right in pronouncing it, but it abounds in thoughtful and eloquent passages. There is in it the promise of 'Thorndale.' I will only make two extracts from it, both of which have an autobiographical interest. The first describes the experience of an unsuccessful poet:—

"I sought it not—I sought not this gift of poetry—I despised not the ruder toils of existence—I strove to pursue them, but I strove in vain. I could not walk along this earth with the busy forward tread of other men. The fair wonder detained and withheld me. Flowers on their slender stalks could prove a hindrance in my path; the light acacia would fling the barrier of its beauty across my way; the slow-thoughted stream would bend me to its winding current. Was it fault of mine that all nature was replete with feeling that compassed and enthralled me? On the surface of the lake at even-tide there lay how sweet a sadness! Hope visited me from the blue hills. There was perpetual revelry of thought amidst the clouds and in the wide cope of heaven. The passion of the poet came to me, not knowing what it was. It came, the gift of tranquil skies, and was breathed by playful zephyrs, and fell on me with serene influence from the bright and silent stars.

"I saw others pursuing and enjoying the varied prosperity of life. I felt no envy at their success, and no participation in their desires. I could not call in and limit my mind to the concerns of a personal welfare. I had leaned my ear unto the earth, and heard

Digitized by Google

the beating of her mighty heart and the murmur of her mysteries, and my spirit had lost its fitness for any selfish aim or narrow purpose. I stood forth to be the interpreter of his own world to man. Alas! I myself am but one—the poorest of the restless and craving multitude.

"Gone! gone for ever! is the pleasant hope that danced along my path with feet that never wearied and timbrel that never paused! Oh, gay illusion, whither hast thou led me, and to what desolation has the music of thy course conducted! I am laden as it were with the fruitage of kind affections, but I myself am forlorn and disregarded; I kindle with innumerable sympathies, but am shut out for ever from social endearments, from the sweet relationships that make happy the homes of other men. I am faint with love of the beautiful, and my heart pants with its unclaimed devotion—but who may love the poet in his poverty?"

. . . .

The second passage that I quote from 'Ernesto' embodies the conclusions of a speculative intellect that, having "proved all things" with unflinching energy, could best "hold fast" what it recognised as fundamental truth—fundamental, and *vital* to the thinker from first to last!

"The most sublime, the most essential, the most irresistible of all doctrines—the existence of an Intellectual Creator of the universe—needs the support of other faculties than reason. The many learned treatises which daily appear to elucidate and confirm what is called the argument from design, would prove as feeble and ineffectual as they are felt to be strong and con-

Digitized by Google

vincing were they restricted in their appeal to a passionless and unimaginative intellect. . . .

"In such questions, a reason, unsupported by the common feelings of our nature, and by those associations of thought which such feelings have generated or maintained, might probably oscillate for ever. But indeed it is not as a doctrine explanatory of the world's creation that the belief of a divine existence holds the place it does in the mind of man. We claim a *humanized* causation. Our transiency seeks support on an eternal mind, our fears implore, our hopes solicit, a beneficence that is beyond the circle and superior to the dominion of nature. We may cavil, but we *must* believe; the heart demands it, and reason allows if she could not compel. Do we wish by this to enfeeble the proof of a divine existence? We could not live a day, an hour, without this faith. We desire only to point out the indissoluble union, the harmony and necessary co-operation of the several faculties of the human mind—of the reason, the feelings, and the imagination. We honour this compounded and complicate condition of humanity. Is it for nothing that we are imaginative beings? that we must for ever carry forth the feelings of a known world into the region of the unknown? He who would deny to his affections all influence on his belief must either pronounce (and this is frequent and harmless) *that* to be the pure result of ratiocination to which other operations of the mind have greatly contributed; or in the almost suicidal attempt to separate himself entirely from the control of feeling, he must unsocialize his reason, deprive himself of some of the greatest sources of human felicity, and lose,

Digitized by Google

it may be, the needful guidance and *restraint* of those very passions which he so contemptuously estimated."

In 1836 and 1837 my husband wrote several articles for the *Quarterly Review*, in reference to which I find some notes from Lockhart, at that time its editor. These, and a few other letters that I shall presently refer to, had been put aside by William long years ago, and first came to sight again after our marriage, when a box of stored-away books was sent to him at Brighton. I remember well that his first impulse was to destroy these letters, but I pleaded for their preservation, and they were therefore consigned to another stationary and seldom-opened box, and thus escaped the doom of every justly appreciating written tribute paid him in later years—the flames. I can recall a note from Mr. J. S. Mill, in the autumn of 1865, alluding in his large-hearted, generous way to certain lectures William had delivered at Kensington more than twenty years before (lectures of which I had heard *him* make casual and disparaging mention), and that note I meant to abstract and preserve; but when next I rummaged my husband's little desk—which always stood open to my inspection—I could not find it; the note had been burnt! But to return to the *Quarterly*. It appears that Mr. Lockhart did not wish it to transpire that William Smith's articles were those of a young and unknown writer. In one of the notes I find, "I have heard nothing but good of your paper on Landor, and I am sure it has told tenfold the more from no one knowing as yet where it came from. Be it so with Mr. Bulwer. You will lose nothing in the issue." Never surely did editor find a contributor more conveniently willing to suppress himself! Two

Digitized by Google

of these articles were on legal subjects, one on Sir Harris Nicholas—a kind friend of my husband's, at whose house he was in the habit of meeting interesting society—one was on Modern Science, the remaining two on Landor and Bulwer.

I wish I could more distinctly trace William Smith's legal experiences. I know that he studied every branch of law that a solicitor can practise, before he began to read for the bar with a Mr. Brodie. I think that it must have been in 1838 that he was called to the bar at the Middle Temple. Although I have spoken of office routine as irksome to him, yet in the history and philosophy of Jurisprudence he always found vivid interest, and would recommend the study as eminently favourable to the best development of the mind. Certainly he never in later years regretted having undergone this legal training. Perhaps he owed to it the rare tempering of lively imagination by shrewdest common sense, of quick feeling by dispassionate judgment. But in his early days the bias towards a life devoted to poetry and abstract thought was too strong to be resisted without suffering, and the combining professional study with literary pursuits must have been a strain upon a frame that was never a strong one. On no point was his counsel to the young more strenuous than in regard to the dangers of such divided allegiance. Here are some words of his on the subject:—"It is a piece of advice we would give to every man, but especially to the student—Harmonize your labours. If ambition prompt you to mingle two conflicting studies that will not accord, that breed perpetual civil war in the mind, we charge you to fling away ambition. If

Digitized by Google

the higher and more beloved study—be it science, or poetry, or philosophy—will *not* yield, then choose at once for it and poverty, if such must be the alternative. Better anything than a ruined, disordered mind; or, if you prefer the expression, than a confirmed cerebral disease." We shall find the writer of this passage making such decided choice by and bye. But the time had not yet come.

In 1839 William Smith published 'A Discourse on Ethics of the School of Paley.' "The late Professor Ferrier," I quote from the obituary notice in the *Scotsman*, "used to speak of this pamphlet,—in bulk it is nothing more,—as one of the best written and most ingeniously reasoned attacks upon Cudworth's doctrine that had ever appeared." It is interesting to find that the favourite brother Theyre—William's fellow-student at Glasgow,—who had now for several years been a clergyman of the Church of England, and was Hulsean Lecturer in 1839-40, adopted the opposite stand-point, and in the notes to the second volume of his Lectures vigorously contends against the theory put forth in the 'Discourse on Ethics,' while admitting, with evident satisfaction, that it had never "met with a more ingenious as well as eloquent advocate."

It was also in 1839 that my husband, having been introduced by Mr. Warren to the Messrs. Blackwood, wrote his first article, entitled 'A Prosing on Poetry,' for their Magazine. Thus began a much-valued connexion, that endured to the end of his life, and an uninterrupted friendship. His contributions were very varied—tales, adaptations from foreign literature, at first intermingled with reviews. Later the articles became more exclu-

Digitized by Google

sively critical and devoted to philosophical subjects. I have the whole series, bound up in eight volumes, containing a hundred and twenty papers, not one of them hastily or carelessly written, not one that does not contain unbiassed criticism and earnest thought. I often look at the volumes regretfully: so much wisdom and charm of style seems buried there—forgotten! But I cannot doubt that these contributions did good work in their day, enlarged and enriched many a kindred mind, woke inquiry and diffused toleration. Some years ago Mr. Blackwood proposed to reprint a selection from them, but my husband declined, and though he still would from habit tear out and lay aside his articles, I found written on the paper that contained all those of later date, "To be burnt—when—." In that one instance I could not obey him.

In 1840 William Smith published a pamphlet on Law Reform, written in his own easy, lucid style, "for the general reader," and calling, not only for certain changes that have since taken place, but for several now under consideration.

I think that about this time my husband's life must have been peculiarly pleasant. He was still living with the mother who so loved him, and whom he so loved; there were cheerful homes of married brothers and sisters, where he was always eagerly welcomed—depended upon on social occasions to make the "party go off well" by his bright talk and smile—and he had besides his own circle of personal friends, amongst whom I may name George Henry Lewes,[1] Samuel War-

[1] Since I wrote this Mr. Lewes has sent me his reminiscences of his friend, which I gratefully transcribe here, though they refer to a

Digitized by Google

ren, the author of 'The Correlation of Physical Forces' (now Mr. Justice Grove), Frederick Denison Maurice, and John Sterling. I have before alluded to his habit of under-estimating—perhaps I should rather say his inability to realize—the amount of the regard he inspired. Hence, while delighting to enlarge upon the special merits of more successful men, he would touch very lightly upon his own intercourse with them. But from other sources I know something of the charm they found in his society, and the regret with which they

somewhat later period. "It was, I think, early in the year 1842 that I first made the acquaintance of William Smith, an acquaintance that very rapidly grew into a friendship over which no cloud ever crossed. Our ways of life separated us, and we saw but little of each other during the last twenty years, but the separation was of bodies only, not of minds. He was at first what I knew him at last, one of the few men deservedly called *distinguished*, a genuine and individual nature not in any degree factitious or commonplace. He was himself, and all his opinions and sentiments were his own, not echoes or compromises. In spite of his shyness, there was an affectionate expansiveness in his manner which irresistibly attracted me, and although I always spoke of him as 'Little Smith,' the epithet, absurd enough coming from one no bigger than himself, only expressed the sort of tender feeling one has for a woman. So far from its implying any assumption of superiority, I regarded him not only as my elder, but in many respects my superior; and in the height of our discussions, which were incessant, my antagonism was always tempered by that veneration which one irresistibly feels in presence of a genuine nature. It was this genuineness, and his keen flexible sympathy, which formed the great charm of his society. One felt thoroughly at home with him at once.

"At that time he had lodgings in Pembroke Square, Kensington. I lived in the same Square, so that we saw each other frequently; though it was I who mostly had to pay the visit, his reserve making him less willing to come in to me. He led a lonely, uncomfortable life, as such a man in lodgings inevitably must, unless he goes into society. I used to preach to him against his waste of time in desultory study, and his injudicious arrangement of the hours of work. In vain. Like most literary men, he had a prejudice in favour of night-work, and would fritter away the precious hours of morning, taking

Digitized by Google

lost sight of him; and I shall here copy a letter of Sterling's—the man of all others I have heard my husband say whom he could have best loved—both because it is interesting in itself, and proves the value Sterling set upon his friend :—

"CLIFTON, *January 6th*, 1840.

"MY DEAR SMITH,—I have very little time for writing any but the most indispensable letters before I leave England. Yours, however, is too kind, and gave me too much unexpected

---

little exercise, and less relaxation. I used to tell him that marriage was the only safety for him—and so it proved! So affectionate a nature could not be content with study and work: the heart claimed its own!

"There was another point on which I used to preach with equal unsuccess—the waste of his fine mind in metaphysical research. This was a standing subject of controversy. His profound seriousness and restless desire to get to the bottom of every subject made him cling pertinaciously to even the faintest hope of a possible answer to those questions which for centuries have vexed speculative minds, and no failure could discourage him.

"We were always *battling*, yet never once did we get even near a quarrel. On many points, wide as the poles asunder, we managed to mangle each other's arguments without insult, and whenever opposition seemed verging towards the excitation of temper, some playful remark or wild paradox of retort was ready to clear the air with laughter. In this way we 'travelled over each other's minds,' and travelled over the universe. On matters of poetry and criticism we were more at one; but even there, precisely because Smith had his own views, his own mode of looking at things, there was an endless charm in listening to him and differing from him. Till deep into the night we would sit 'talking of lovely things that conquer death;' and I seem now to see the sweet smile and the lustrous eye fixed on me, and hear his pleasant voice playfully uttering some fine truth. One of the noticeable points in him was the lambent playfulness, combined with great seriousness, the subtle humour and the subtle thought which gave a new aspect to old opinions, so that we may say of him what Goethe says of Schiller, that—

'Hinter ihm, im wesenlosen Scheine,
Lag, was uns Alle bändigt—das Gemeine.'"

Digitized by Google

pleasure, to be left unacknowledged. I attach little value to the contents of my volume as poems, but had my judgment of them been different, no corroboration of it from others could give me the kind of gratification which I derive from finding that you sometimes think of me, and return so cordially the regard which I must always feel for you. The future is with me still more uncertain than with most people, but if any among the strange chances of life should bring us within reach of each other, I should consider it a more unalloyed advantage and pleasure than most of those which life affords. As to the Professorship, my suggestion in answer to Mill's inquiry whether I knew of a fitting person would have been the same had I known of you only what I have read in your writings. There was at that time some reason to imagine the stars might be turned from their courses for once, and the Glasgow Professors from jobbing. It would have been, of course, very pleasant to see you in your right place, and I still trust that some opportunity may arise of having you established as a public teacher.

"I should be very glad to know something of what you are about, and also to have some accounts of Theyre and of Weigall —to both of whom pray remember me warmly. I leave this on Friday for Falmouth, whence I am to embark for Madeira. I have had a long and severe illness, and at one time seemed hardly likely to recover. It is still very doubtful whether I can face another English winter, and I may very possibly be afloat again on this yeasty world—with a wife and four children to lighten my movements. At all events, I shall be always affectionately yours, JOHN STERLING."

In connexion with this faint hope of a Glasgow Chair, to which the letter alludes, I find two notes of Mr. J. S. Mill's, full of friendly co-operation and interest; but highly as my husband esteemed the post of Professor of Moral Philosophy in a Scotch University, I am sure that the whole scheme arose entirely from the zeal of a few friends, and that its impracticability gave

Digitized by Google

him no sense of disappointment. I never heard him dwell upon it.

In the summer of 1842 a great grief befell him. His dear mother died at the age of seventy-five, having survived her husband nineteen years. I have spoken of the peculiar tenderness between the mother and son. Some friends who remember her well have described her to me in her later years, placid and smiling in her arm-chair, knitting away, with William seated on a footstool beside her, kissing her hand, interrupting her work by his playful ways and tender raillery, she pretending to chide—she, so proud, so fond! Into his intellectual nature, his thought-life, the dear mother did not and could not enter, but she had a boundless love for him; his comforts, his tastes, were paramount with her; he was her first object always, and one of his surviving sisters writes to me:—"I shall never forget the desolation of heart William expressed when the grave closed over our mother." Later, his wife and he held it as a treasure in common that both were the youngest and peculiarly loved children of their mothers, and never felt their hearts more closely knit together than when speaking of them. I believe that he spent the winter of that first orphan year with a married sister. Afterwards the dreary London lodging life to which Mr. Lewes refers must have set in.

The play of 'Athelwold' was published in 1842, and I transcribe, from one of Mr. Mill's notes, a passage relating to it, not without interest, knowing whose criticism it is that he quotes:—

"I showed your play to the most superior woman I have ever known, and the most fastidious judge of poetry, and she writes

Digitized by Google

to me about it: 'I like the play very much. I think the subject an excellent one, and the mode of saying it natural, healthy, and quite free from the affectation of "old dramatists," which is an affectation I, of all others, most nauseate. It is the only play, and almost the only poem, of the present time which I know without affected mannerism.'

"I think it worth while telling you of this opinion, because, if you were acquainted with the writer, I am sure you would attach real value to her judgment, and especially to her approbation.—Ever yours, J. S. MILL."

Here is another letter on the subject of 'Athelwold,' a little flowery and prolix, but also interesting:—

"3 SERJEANTS' INN, *8th Feby.* 1843.

"DEAR SIR,—I have long desired to gratify myself by expressing to you the deep admiration with which, attracted by the extracts I saw in the weekly papers, I perused your tragedy of 'Athelwold,' and by seeking from you such recognition of a common love for dramatic literature as may be testified by your acceptance of my very frail and imperfect attempts at that delightful species of poetry. I hope I do not trespass too far on your good-nature, emboldened by some old recollections of several members of your family, and by the assurance of Mr. Warren that my offering will not be unwelcome, when I ask you to accept of my own slender dramas, and of the earnest wish I cherish that you may realize the splendid promise which your 'Athelwold' has given to the world. It seems to me to combine more purely dramatic power with more of poetical luxuriance and tenderness than any of the dramas which have, within the last few years, sprung from the imagination of our national genius. The only obstacles which I perceive to its entire success in representation are the impossibility of presenting any image of that loveliness which, in its infant perfection, charmed the mighty Dunstan, and the magic power of which sways the heart of 'Athelwold,' and the destinies of the scene—which, being seen, will *not* be believed—and in the too painful nature of Elfrida's perfidy, and the wearying agony of

Digitized by Google

the closing scenes—wearying though touched and softened by exquisite beauty. But on that inner stage—the theatre which every true lover of the dramatic poem lights up within his own mind as he reads—will 'Athelwold' ever hold a noble place, which no bad passions of managers, nor caprices of actors, nor envy of author-critics shall abolish or destroy. My own plays are, I well know, mere proofs of the affection of one who has loved, 'not wisely but too well,' the dramatic form of poetry, and has been unduly tempted by the opportunity of tasting the pleasure which, with all its alloy, *does* belong to the realization of the conceptions of the mind on the stage. That you may attain this pleasure with as little of the annoyances which encircle it as theatrical associations will permit, and extend and complete the lasting fame which your first work promises, and find in all dramatic creation to be its 'exceeding great reward,' is the earnest wish of, dear Sir, your faithful and obedient servant, T. N. TALFOURD."

In the spring of 1843, Mr. Macready made application to the author for permission to act 'Athelwold.' I find two little notes on the subject, and give the second :—

"5 CLARENCE TERRACE, REGENT'S PARK.

"MY DEAR SIR,—We are about to endeavour, with your permission, to give a representation of 'Athelwold' before the close of our present season. I very much regret my intention of producing it should have been so long deferred, but in a theatre the most careful plans are constantly deranged by unexpected circumstances.

"I should wish to have your assent and also your approval of the large omissions which must of necessity be made in its performance,—Yours, my dear Sir, most sincerely,

"W. C. MACREADY."

On the first night of its representation the play met with decided success, and the author was enthusiastically called for. What seemed to have impressed

Digitized by Google

him most on the occasion was Macready's exquisite rendering of the character of 'Athelwold.' Miss Helen Faucit (now Mrs. Theodore Martin) recollects that one particular moment in her impersonation of Elfrida was pronounced by Macready "the best thing she ever did." We have seen that the season was already drawing to a close. The play had therefore a brief run, and why it was not reproduced the following year I know not with any certainty.

The autumn of 1843 was spent by my husband in Paris, where the lectures at the Sorbonne were his especial interest. I have before me a note to his sister, Mrs. Weigall, characteristically describing his position in a French boarding-house: "stuttering out my broken sentences of French, thinking it a great good fortune if the simplest thing I utter is understood, and a great honour if the dullest person in the company will condescend to talk to me."

I know that for a time William Smith went the Western Circuit, but to him it proved "so expensive and profitless he had to relinquish it." Probably he had already done so at this time, for, in the summer of 1845, he made a tour in Switzerland. How intensely he enjoyed it appears in a paper,—'The Mountain and the Cloud,'—written on his return, and published in *Blackwood's Magazine*. And in a letter to the sister who was his regular correspondent, I find expressions of delight: "I saw Mont Blanc to perfection, the lake, and the splendid scenery that lies between. This *was* pleasure! To be carried by a mule over the mountain-passes, alone, your guide walking silent behind, the beast taking care of himself and you too, the eye

Digitized by Google

greeted at every turn by something new and great, *I*, in my poor experience of life, have had no enjoyment comparable to it."

The winter following was spent in Brussels, at the house of his eldest brother Frederick (who had for some years lived in Belgium), where William had the cheerful companionship of young nieces. It was there he wrote 'Sir William Crichton,' which appeared, with a reprint of 'Athelwold,' and of his two early poems, in a small, a very small unpretending volume,[1] published by Pickering towards the end of 1846. I copy Serjeant Talfourd's estimate of the play :—

"3 SERJEANTS' INN, CHANCERY LANE,
4th February 1847.

"DEAR SIR,—You have added greatly to the obligation you conferred on me by sending me your noble tragedy of 'Athelwold,' when you directed your publisher to present me with your small volume containing that drama and two others of kindred—one, at least in my humble judgment, of superior—merit. Of 'Guidone' I have been able only to take a glance, too transient to know more than that it is worthy of its author; but 'Sir William Crichton' I have read with the deep and earnest attention it commands and requites, and feel that I

[1] This small volume was never widely circulated, but it met with cordial recognition from a few. Walter Savage Landor was one of those who estimated it highly. It is to Mr. Weigall that I owe this knowledge. He writes thus: "About eighteen years ago I saw a good deal of Landor. On one occasion I mentioned William's works. He said immediately: 'I know Mr. Smith, and everything he has published. I have a great respect for him, sir. There are things in his works quite equal to anything that Shakespeare ever wrote.' I said I was much gratified to hear him say so, and wished the world thought so too. He replied, 'The world does not think so now, because it is chiefly composed of fools; but I know it, and I believe some day the world will agree with me.'"

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

have acquired a possession for life. Whether enough of stirring action would remain if all its fine shadings of thought were withdrawn, to fill the stage for the ordinary point of tragic development, I will not determine; but that with much of picturesque action and heroic character it has the highest excellence of thoughtful beauty, of affections steeped in meditative sweetness, I am as sure as that I think and feel; while I read it, to me

> 'There is that within
> Makes all external scene, whate'er it be,
> Mere dream and phantom—merely moving cloud
> Athwart some pale and stationary thought.'

And those lines, which seem to me indicative of your true genius, seem also to me among the most beautiful ever written. If Heaven gave me such a choice, there are very few of which I had rather been the author."

It was in the spring of 1846 that my husband visited Italy.[1] He travelled, as usual, alone, and with eager, unresting haste. I have heard him say that he spoke to no one; that the excitement the marvels of ancient art occasioned was inexpressible; that he went on from place to place regardless of fatigue. From Rome he writes to his sister, Mrs. Weigall:—"I must tell you that I, even I, am here—that I have seen St. Peter's, the Vatican, the Coliseum, and I know not what collections of statues and paintings." The morning after his arrival he "sallied forth to St. Peter's;" one gladly realizes how light the step must have been, how vivid the enjoyment!

[1] I think it must have been before this that the bust here photographed was taken. The sculptor, Mr. Weigall, writes of it as follows: "I saw then in William the profound philosopher, the penetrating, calm, judicious critic, and the tender, passionate poet, and, I believe, to those who have eyes to see such things, all these phases of his character may be found in the bust."

Digitized by Google

"I had been prepared," he says, "to expect that the gigantic proportions of the statuary and other accessories took off from the apparent magnitude of the building; but what I was not prepared for was the magnificent effect of all this gigantic statuary. From the moment you enter within the limits of St. Peter's everything swells out into colossal proportions. The interior of the dome is perfect—so mellow and so chaste with all its splendours. Then the effect of the high altar is quite startling. It stands just under the dome (in pictures it appears necessarily as if at the extremity of the building). You know the four twisted columns of bronze, but you have not *felt* their height; and besides, there is much of this altar that cannot be represented in a picture, as it lies beneath the surface. A marble staircase descends before the altar. You look down and see golden doors, and before them a marble image of a Pope kneeling there in eternal prayer for the people. Then in every direction such stupendous sculpture: figures thrown with such audacity and grace over the architraves; and above all, the tombs of various Pontiffs, which add to their other merits that of being so well placed that at first they seem groups designed only for the ornament of the church. But what shall I say of the *Vatican?* of the Apollo, the Laocoon, of a certain Jupiter Tonans, the most sublime representation of the old ruler of the skies? I had better say nothing, for in my present mood I should probably be guilty of some extravagance. There is also a collection of sculpture at the Capitol—the celebrated Dying Gladiator, a Venus, and the delightful little group of Cupid and Psyche; in short, the sculpture here is beyond all description admirable, and the delight I have experienced is more than I would willingly make even the attempt to express.

"Then have I not seen the Sistine Chapel, and the frescos of Michael Angelo? Now as to these, you know, or at least Henry knows, (how often have I thought that *he* ought to have been here!) that these consist first of a large picture on the wall representing the Last Day, and of the compartments of the roof. Now for that same large picture of the Last Day: I got nothing from it; it excited in me no sentiment whatever; I have not a word to say about it; but some of those compart-

Digitized by Google

ments of the roof are amongst the sublimest things I have ever beheld. The effect is quite thrilling—is awful. You breathe hard as you look up to them.

"The Coliseum I have not seen by moonlight, and probably shall not; but on a very beautiful day I traversed it and mounted it, and explored it in all directions. It is certainly the king of ruins. And you see from it the principal ruins of ancient Rome; you have the blue hills on the horizon, so that a visit to the Coliseum is full of interest. But I am falling, I fear, into the gossip of travellers, which is just a reminiscence to themselves of a pleasure they have had, but which conveys nothing to any other. As to the city of Rome, I can tell you that all that is not temple or palace is filth and wretchedness. . . . I wish to see other parts of Italy, and therefore cannot stop very long in any one. My next stage will be Naples, then I retrace my steps to Florence, to Venice, to Milan, through Switzerland and the Rhine, home; all which, though it *sounds* a great deal, will not take much time in accomplishing."

This programme however was slightly modified. On his homeward way he became very ill, and had to make a halt at his eldest brother's house in Brussels. By him William was, as I have often heard the latter recall, most tenderly nursed. In many particulars there was a family likeness between the two men. Both had the faculty of inspiring intense affection in those who knew them best, both the same refined courtesy in domestic life. Their cast of mind was indeed dissimilar, but the elder brother fully appreciated the nature of the younger. I shall never forget his looking at William with moistened eyes, on the occasion of a flying visit of ours many years later, and saying: "He was always quite different from the rest of the world." His daughters, too, most lovingly remember the student uncle, so interested in their pursuits, so

Digitized by Google

encouraging, so playful.[1] In him the solitary nature was strangely combined, or I might rather say alternated, with the eminently social. When he did come out of his own element of abstract thought, it was to enter with genuine interest into the very slightest concerns of others; to set talk flowing with greater spontaneity; to bring out the best of every mind. He came into a room where he felt himself welcome like an influx of fresh air and light. Whoever he addressed was conscious of a certain exhilaration and increased freedom, for he, more than any person I have known, "gave one leave to be one's-self."

But it may be asked, Why are not more of his own letters quoted to illustrate his character better than the words of another can? I do not know that there are any of his early letters extant. At no time of his life

[1] It is to one of these nieces that I owe the following lines of his, which she tells me her uncle put into her hand as a kind of reply to some theological discussion or other, which, with the self-assertion of early youth, she had tried to force upon him :—

CHRISTIAN RESIGNATION.

There is a sweetness in the world's despair,
There is a rapture of serenity,
When severed quite from earthly hope or care,
The heart is free to suffer or to die.

The crown, the palm, of saints in Paradise,
My wearied spirit does not crave to win;
Breathe—in Thy cup, O Christ, of agonies—
Breathe Thy deep love, and let me drink therein.

To weep as Thou hast wept, I ask no more,
Be mine the sorrows that were known to Thee;
To the bright heavens I have no strength to soar,
But I would find Thee on Thy Calvary.

Digitized by Google

does he appear to have kept up a large or varied correspondence, and he had an especial dislike to letters of his being preserved or referred to. In more than one case I know he entreated that they should be destroyed, and (however reluctantly) his wish was complied with. I think it proceeded from the same quite abnormal sensitiveness, that made him shrink not only from any allusion to his own books, but from the very sight of them. Never was I able to keep a volume of his writing on table or shelf for three days together! Silently they would be abstracted or pushed into some dark recess. But as to his letters—though naturally I am averse to extract from my own stores, and I have no letters on general subjects to draw from—I know from testimony as well as experience that they were quite special in their simplicity and natural grace. No one familiar with him could possibly have attributed his shortest note to any other person. It was sure to bear some indefinable stamp of his individuality. Here is a passage of his regarding the letters of Southey, most applicable to his own :—

"The letters as we advance through these volumes, become more and more characterized by that consummate ease and unstudied elegance which are the result only of long practice in composition; for the perfect freedom and grace of the epistolary style may be described as the spontaneous expression of one previously habituated to a choice selection of terms. It requires this combination of present haste and past study. The pen should run without a pause, without an after-thought, and the page be left without a correc-

Digitized by Google

tion; but it must be the pen of one who in times past has paused very long and corrected very often."

The influence of William Smith's foreign tours is traceable in his contributions to *Blackwood's Magazine* during the years 1846 and 1847. 'Mildred,' a tale published in the latter year, the scene of which is laid in Italy, contains some descriptions of the treasures of the Vatican, which will, I think, be read with interest. The extract following is taken from a conversation between two who are in heart even more than friends, while outwardly something less:—

"'You are before the Amazon,' said Winston; 'it is the statue of all others which has most fascinated me. I cannot understand why it should bear the name it does. I suppose the learned in these matters have their reasons: I have never inquired nor feel disposed to inquire into them; but I am sure the character of the statue is not Amazonian. That attitude—the right arm raised to draw aside the veil, the left hand at its elbow steadying it—that beautiful countenance, so full of sadness and of dignity—no, these cannot belong to an Amazon.'

"'To a woman,' said Mildred, 'it is allowed to be indifferent on certain points of learning; and in such cases as this I certainly take advantage to the full privilege of my sex. I care not what they call the statue. It may have been called an Amazon by Greek and Roman—it may have been so named by the artist himself when he sent it home to his patron; I look at it as a creation standing between me and the mind of the artist: and sure I am, that, bear what name it may, the sculptor has embodied here all that his soul had felt

Digitized by Google

of the sweetness and power and dignity of woman. It is a grander creation than any goddess I have seen; has more of thought.'

"'And as a consequence,' interposed Winston, 'more of sadness, of unhappiness. How the mystery of life seems to hang upon that pensive brow! I used to share an impression, which I believe is very general, that the deep sorrow which comes of thought, the reflective melancholy which results from pondering on the bitter problem of life, was peculiar to the moderns. This statue and others which I have lately seen have convinced me that the sculptor of antiquity has occasionally felt and expressed whatever could be extracted from the mingled poetry of a Byron and a Goethe.'

"'It seems that the necessity of representing the gods in the clear light of happiness and knowledge deprived the Greek artist of one great source of sublimity. But it is evident,' continued Mildred, 'that the mysterious, with its attendant sorrow, was known also to him. How could it be otherwise? Oh! what a beautiful creation is this we stand before! And what an art it is which permits us to stand thus before a being of this high order, and note all its noble passions! From the real life we should turn our eyes away, or drop them abashed upon the ground. Here is more than life, and we may look on it by the hour, and mark its graceful sorrow, its queen-like beauty, and this overmastered grief which we may wonder at but dare not pity.'

"They passed on to other statues. They paused before the Menander sitting in his chair. 'The attitude,' said she, 'is so noble that the chair becomes a throne.

Digitized by Google

But still, how plainly it is *intellectual power* that sits enthroned there! The posture is imperial; and yet how evident that it is the empire of thought only that he governs in! And this little statue of Esculapius,' she added, 'kept me a long while before it. The healing sage—how faithfully is he represented! What a sad benevolence—acquainted with pain—compelled to inflict even in order to restore.'

"They passed through the Hall of the Muses.

"'How serene are *all* the Muses!' said Winston. 'This is as it should be. Even Tragedy, the most moved of all, how evidently her emotion is one of thought, not of passion! Though she holds the dagger in her down-dropt hand, how plainly we see that she has not used it! She has picked it up from the floor after the fatal deed was perpetrated, and is musing on the terrible catastrophe, and the still more terrible passions that led to it.'

"They passed through the *Hall of the Animals*, but this had comparatively little attraction for Mildred. Her companion pointed out the bronze Centaur for her admiration.

"'You must break a Centaur in half,' said she, 'before I can admire it. And if I am to look at a satyr, pray let the goat's legs be hid in the bushes. I cannot embrace in one conception these fragments of man and brute. Come with me to the neighbouring gallery. I wish to show you a Jupiter seated at the further end of it, which made half a Pagan of me this morning as I stood venerating it.'

"'The head of your Jupiter,' said Winston, as they approached it, 'is surpassed I think by more than one

Digitized by Google

bust of the same god that we have already seen; and I find something of stiffness or rigidity in the figure; but the impression it makes as a whole is very grand.'

"'It will grow wonderfully on you as you look at it,' said Mildred. 'How well it typifies all that a Pagan would conceive of the Supreme Ruler of the Skies, the controller of the powers of nature, the great administrator of the world who has the Fates for his council! His power irresistible, but no pride in it, no joy, no triumph. He is without passion. In his right hand lies the thunder, but it reposes on his thigh; and his left hand rests calmly upon his tall sceptre surmounted by an eagle. In his countenance there is the tranquillity of unquestioned supremacy, but there is no repose. There is care, a constant wakefulness. It is the governor of a nature whose elements have never known one moment's pause.'

"'I see it as you speak,' said Winston. He then proposed that they should go together and look at the Apollo, but Mildred excused herself.

"'I have paid my devotions to the god,' she said, 'this morning, when the eyes and the mind were fresh. I would not willingly displace the impression that I now carry away for one which would be made on a fatigued and jaded attention.'

"'Is it not god-like?'

"'Indeed it is. I was presumptuous enough to think I knew the Apollo. A cast of the head esteemed to be a very good one—my uncle had given me—I placed it in my own room; for a long time it was the first thing that the light fell upon, or my eyes opened to in the morning; and in my attempt at crayons, I copied it I

Digitized by Google

believe in every aspect. It seemed to me therefore that in visiting the Apollo I should recognise an old acquaintance. No such thing. The cast had given me hardly any idea of the statue itself. There was certainly no feeling of old acquaintanceship. The brow as I stood in front of the god quite overawed me; involuntarily I retreated for an instant; you will smile, but I had to muster my courage before I could gaze steadily at it.'

"'I am not surprised; the divinity there is in no gentle mood. How majestic, and yet how lightly it touches the earth! It is buoyant with god-head.'

"'What strikes me,' continued Mildred, 'as the great triumph of the artist, is this very anger of the god. It is an anger which, like the arrow he has shot from his bow, spends itself entirely upon its victim; there is no recoil, as in human passion, upon the mind of him who feels it. There is no jar there. The lightning strikes *down*—it tarries not a moment in the sky above.'"

. . . . .

A complete and decisive change in William Smith's manner of life was now drawing near. I may mention an incident—supplied by Mr. Weigall—which must have closely preceded it. "Soon before the Corn Laws were repealed," writes Mr. Weigall, "William was urged by John Stuart Mill to attend a meeting to aid the advocates for repeal. The Honourable Mr. Villiers, Mr. Mill, and William were the principal speakers, and William was beyond doubt the most impressive of them all. The Chartists at the time were getting rampant, and were in great force at that meeting, both men and

Digitized by Google

women. They had disapproved of almost every wisely qualified utterance from Mr. Mill, but when William opened his speech with a most happy and harmonious sentence, the women about me said—'Oh what a beautiful speaker! don't disturb him,' and for some time they seemed delighted; but when he began with his prescient wisdom to caution them against expecting too much from the repeal—that the effect of free-trade in corn would be to equalize prices throughout Europe, they began to howl him down—William stopped and faced the turmoil boldly, and by a very stirring appeal to their candour and sense of fair-play secured again their good-will, and sat down, the great success of the evening. From what I observed on that occasion," adds Mr. Weigall, "I felt convinced that could William have overcome his retiring habits he would have won distinction in public life." But the retiring habits were just then on the point of decisively prevailing.

I do not know whether it was in 1848 or 1849 that my husband acted upon a resolve that must have been for some time gathering—the resolve of entirely relinquishing the pursuit of his profession, and devoting himself to thinking and writing, in perfect solitude, amidst the beautiful scenery of the English lakes. He had made no way at the bar; he was not likely to make any—he had no legal connexions; his heart was not in his calling; his sensitive nature shrank from collision with purely personal aims and ambitions, from the inevitable turmoil and dust of "Life's loud joyous jostling game." He could not, with any hope of success, compete on that arena. And, indeed, in addition to other hindrances, his private fortune, seriously

Digitized by Google

diminished by a loan to an unsuccessful relative (loan which he in his refined generosity converted into a gift), was no longer adequate to the expenses chambers and circuit entailed on the briefless barrister. Then there were other influences at work. The "love of thinking for its own sake" was growing irresistible, and was seconded not only by a "passionate thirst for nature and beauty," but by that craving for solitude which strangely underlay all his social charm, all his enjoyment of society, which found such forcible expression in his earliest poems, and renders portions of 'Thorndale' so unutterably pathetic. Circumstances and character alike now pointed one way. There is a line of Browning's that sums it all up: Thenceforth

"This man decided not to Live, but Know."

My husband has often described to me his first plunge into the new life. It was made at Bowness (on Windermere), a quiet village in those days. There he took a small lodging, where the sitting-room opened into a garden, and for six months he never spoke to a creature, except indeed the few words of necessity to his landlady. It comforts one to remember what loving letters from sisters and nieces must have varied that solitude, as well as what high raptures Nature and Thought bestowed upon their devotee. And then the winters were always social. Some weeks would be spent at the house of his brother-in-law, Mr. Weigall, where there were clever nephews growing up and two much-loved nieces, of whom his sister has told me he was "the idol and the oracle." Some would be pleasantly passed at Bath or Brighton, where he had several friends.

Digitized by Google

In 1851 his still, secluded summer life was varied by an incident that might have given a different direction to all his future. One day the following letter from Professor Wilson was delivered to him. Although it is marked "strictly private and confidential," there can be no indiscretion in giving it now and here:—

"My dear Sir,—Our excellent friend John Blackwood has kindly undertaken to put this letter into your hand at Bowness, or if not, to find your direction there and forward it to you. My health has become very lately so precarious that I have been interdicted by my medical adviser from lecturing this ensuing session, and I can think of no man so qualified meanwhile to discharge for me the duties of my Chair as yourself. I am therefore most anxious, without delay, *to see you here*, when I will explain fully to you what will be required from you. *As yet* the matter is in my own hand, and I do not fear that, though laborious, your duties will be agreeable. You will have to give a course of lectures on Moral Philosophy to my class during my leave of absence from College. It is absolutely necessary that you should be with me *immediately* for a day, that you may empower me to say that I can depend on you, for not a word can I utter publicly or privately without a perfect understanding with you. I shall therefore be looking for you in return to this, and be most happy to receive you in my house on your arrival.—Yours, with all esteem,

"John Wilson.

"6 Gloucester Place, Edinburgh,
Sept. 29*th*, 1851."

Here seemed an opening every way congenial, for William had, as we have seen, a great respect for Scotch philosophy, and looked upon the duties of a Chair in a Scotch University as most honourable and useful. He has told me that he asked for two hours of deliberation, and carried the matter out, to be revolved and decided in the course of his morning's walk. He decided to

Digitized by Google

decline. Swayed by some scruples (how needless!) as to his fitness, possibly by some other scruples—for he was too truthful ever to profess certainty where he was conscious of doubt,—swayed, perhaps, by the spell of the mountains and the life of unfettered thought, by the "spell of the desk," on which already lay the early pages of 'Thorndale.' At all events he did decline, nor have I ever heard him express a regret that he did so. I gain a glimpse of him at this time from a letter of Mr. Blackwood's, written to me after I lost him:—"I remember going up to the Lakes a great many years ago, and finding him all alone at Bowness. It made me sad to leave him so solitary, as I felt that his fine sensitive nature required some one ever nigh who could sympathize with him."

In the May of 1852 a heavy blow fell upon William Smith. His favourite brother Theyre, at that time rector of Wymondham, in Norfolk, died suddenly and prematurely. Thenceforth Brighton, where Mrs. Theyre Smith and her children made their home, became a centre of tenderer interest to William, and his constant winter resort.

It was in the same year that my husband exchanged Windermere for Keswick Lake, the lovely Derwentwater, afterwards so dear to us both. There the summer solitude was less unbroken than heretofore. He was introduced by an early friend, who had left the Bar for the Church (the Rev. J. H. Smith, of Leamington), to Dr. Lietch, a physician who had been led by ill-health to give up practice in a large town, and benefit a then comparatively retired district by his active and enlightened benevolence. How refreshing

Digitized by Google

the society of each to the other appears from a letter written to me by Dr. Lietch in the October of 1872 :—

"In 1852, '53, and '54, when your husband was at work on 'Thorndale,' I saw much of him; the old felled spruce tree, converted into a rude seat on the hill of Faw Park, is still, or was last year, in existence, on which we often sat and talked of many things, which when 'Thorndale' was published and sent to me by him, were vividly recalled to me. At that time there was something of Clarence in him, something (at times much) of Cyril, occasionally gloomy flashes of Seckendorf, and frequently 'the perfect tranquillity with which the poet would admit, on some most momentous subjects, his profound ignorance.' The 'wistful perpetual argument' which was his life was then going on with incessant energy, and was more visible to me then than during the last twelve or fifteen years of his life, when I saw less of him, and when, indeed, your presence and love had silenced many conflicts, and reconciled him to many doubts and difficulties in this incomprehensible world."

Several summers had now been spent at Portinscale, a pretty hamlet within a short walk of Dr. and Mrs. Lietch's cheerful and kindly home; but in 1856 an attractive row of new lodging-houses, and the close vicinity of the very excellent library that the town of Keswick possesses, induced William Smith to move to 3 Derwentwater Place. And there, in a light, pleasant, three-windowed room, with peeps of lake and mountains, 'Thorndale' was getting finished. I transcribe a passage from an article on Landor, written in 1853, which appears to me interesting as virtually a criticism and a justification from the pen of the author of the form his own book in great measure assumed :—

"The dialogue, as we have intimated, has lost ground amongst us as a form of composition, and there are other reasons than the caprice of fashion or the love of

Digitized by Google

change for this general distaste towards it. In an age where many books are to be read, we like to come at once and rapidly to the gist of the matter; we wish to be led straightway to the conclusion we are finally to rest in. We have little time to spare, and cannot afford to be bandied about from one speaker to another. Why this circuitous path, when we might have gone in a direct road from one point to the other? Why this zigzag, this tacking about, as if we were for ever under contrary winds? Or let it be the line of beauty itself we are illustrating, why these undulations *here* when we have our wicket-gate before us, and might reach it by a straight and level path? It is still worse when there is no wicket-gate to enter, no final conclusion to rest in, and a dialogue replete with thought and discussion proves to be written with a dramatic rather than a didactic purpose. Art for the sake of art, where the province is speculative truth, becomes a rather questionable matter. Earnest-minded men like to see clearly where it is that the author himself is earnest and sincere—where it is that he really intends to work upon their conviction, and where he is merely exercising his ingenuity to give pleasure or create surprise.

"We note these objections to the dialogue, without, however, entirely acquiescing in them. If this form of composition may be sometimes wearisome or vexatious to the reader, it may be all but necessary to the writer. That very incertitude and fluctuation which it admits of may be inseparable from minds whose thoughts and reflections we would nevertheless willingly listen to. Men of this temper could not write at all if they might not draw something of a mask or a veil between them-

Digitized by Google

selves and the public. If it is troublesome to the active impatient man to be bandied about, or partially mystified by dramatic inventions, it may be infinitely to the ease of the writer to adopt some form of composition which does not rigidly compromise him, which gives a certain scope for oscillation, which permits him to say what seemed truth yesterday, though he already suspects that it will not wear exactly the same appearance to-morrow. There are men who grow bold only when they speak in the name or the person of another; they could not utter the 'last word' of the problem if in their own persons they must pledge themselves for ever to their own solution. They see much of the subject, much of its difficulties; they have something withal to say which is worth our hearing; but they doubt if they are in possession of the whole truth. Well, we must permit them some device, some fiction, some dramatic form which will give them liberty of speech, which will sanction half-truths and partial contradictions. We must not tender the oath and the book to all our witnesses. We shall get more truth from some by diminishing the weight of responsibility. Not to add to all this that there are readers also of kindred minds who more frequently find themselves in the attitude of unpledged contemplation than of direct search for truth, or strenuous advocacy of opinions."

It was in the August of 1856 that William Smith and his future wife first became acquainted. My beloved mother—at that time a complete invalid—a little niece of mine who then lived with us, and I, had been spending the early summer in Borrowdale, and we too, attracted by the new and cheerful row of lodging-

Digitized by Google

houses, now took up our abode at 3 Derwentwater Place. The solitary student, to whom I confess I not a little grudged the drawing-room floor, soon sent to proffer one request—that the little girl would not practise her scales, etc., during the morning hours. Now and then we used to pass him in our walks, but he evidently never so much as saw us. There was something quite unusual in the rapt abstraction of his air, the floating lightness of his step; one could not help wondering a little who and what he was, but for several weeks nothing seemed more entirely unlikely than our becoming acquainted.

The lodging-house that we all occupied was kept by a mother and two daughters, who had had a reverse of fortune, and to whom this way of life was new. We were their first tenants. One of the daughters especially was well educated and interesting. To her I gave a copy of Grillparzer's 'Sappho,' which I had recently translated. I knew she would value it a little for my sake, but it never occurred to me that she would take it to the recluse in the drawing-room. She did so however. Piles of manuscript on his desk had convinced her that he was "*an author*," and it amused her to show him the little production of one of the other lodgers! Perhaps he may have thought that she did this at my request, perhaps his kindliness disposed him to help by a hint or two some humble literary aspirant—for always he was kind—at all events the very next day he sent down a message proposing to call, and on the 21st of August there came a knock at our sitting-room door; the rapid entrance of a slight figure, some spell of simplicity and candour in voice and manner

Digitized by Google

that at once gave a sense of freedom, and the give-and-take of easy talk—beginning with comments on the translation in his hand—had already ranged far and wide before he rose and, lightly bowing, left the room.[1] I thought him absolutely unlike any one I had ever met; singularly pleasant in all he said; even more *singularly* encouraging and gracious in his way of listening. He pointed out a passage in the translated play that had particularly taken his fancy:—

> "Like to the little noiseless garden snail,
> At once the home and dweller in the home;
> Still ready—at the very slightest sound—
> Frightened, to draw within itself again;
> Still turning tender feelers all around,
> And slow to venture forth on surface new;
> Yet clinging closely if it cling at all,
> And ne'er its hold relaxing—but in death."

I have transcribed the lines because, in after days, he was much given playfully to designate himself "The Snail." At the close of this first call I well remember that my mother, who had been reclining the while in an adjoining room, exclaimed: "What could you find to talk about so long, my dear? one might have thought you had known each other for years!" That was it! To certain natures William Smith, from the first moment of meeting, could never seem *a stranger!* The call was soon repeated, and afterwards he came

[1] One little observation of his clung to my memory, returns to it very often in my present loneliness—is it too trivial to record? Discussing the building instinct in insect and bird, and their variety of dwellings, he said, "The primary condition of the *home* is that there should be *two*."

Digitized by Google

three times in the evening, as then my mother was able to see him. She was at once impressed with his charm: "How could you call him plain, my dear? he has one of the most delightful countenances I have ever seen!" The dear mother! herself a sufferer and grievously depressed for two years past, it was not frequent at that time to hear her express delight; but she was delighted with *him!* He afterwards told me that just then he was "positively starving for conversation." Hence, perhaps, his effervescence, and *abandon.* On one of these pleasant evenings he read us some of 'Sartor Resartus.' He gave me a copy of his dramas, and the day we left Keswick (just a fortnight after our first meeting) he took me to see his favourite view of the Lake; and we talked with the perfect unreserve of those who hold themselves little likely ever to meet again. He spoke much of his mother, of his happy home with her, his sense of isolation since he had lost her; spoke, also, a little of his literary work and religious opinions. I, on my side, told him of my family circumstances, in which, too, there was sadness and struggle. He frankly said he was sorry we were leaving; I did not say to any one, not even to myself, how sorry I was to go! A short note or two were interchanged, then came a longer letter telling me of the projected departure for Australia of Mr. and Mrs. Weigall and their daughters, of whom he was especially fond, and "whose house afforded him a refuge to which he occasionally fled from this wandering, solitary life." No wonder that he added, "To me this is no little affliction, though *they* write in good spirits;" and, "I think you will

Digitized by Google

have a little compassion for me." From that time the letters grew longer. We planned a meeting at Patterdale in the ensuing spring, and thither he duly went. My mother, however, preferred the prospect of an Irish tour; and I, whose chief solicitude then was the state of her health, never let her find out till long after the touch of disappointment I could not help feeling at being unable to keep tryst.

I will give a few passages from some of these early letters which chanced to get preserved when, at his earnest request, I burnt the correspondence of the two years that intervened between our first and second meeting. But the extracts no more show the charm of the letters than pulled-out petals the beauty of a flower. The first gives a glimpse of his lonely life :—

"That other book you alluded to we should agree upon, I am sure. I think there are passages in Charlotte Brontë's letters which beat all the letters I have ever read. And what a picture! what a family group at the little rectory! . . . How thoroughly I could sympathize with some of these letters in which she describes her own solitude. How many hours have I passed in the evening with the candle put in some corner of the room, because my eyes could no longer bear the light, pacing up and down, and looking out at the clouds—if fortunately there were any clouds to be seen. I have rarely been more interested in any book than this."

Here is his account of 'Thorndale,' which was then on the point of publication :—

"The book—the *libretto* as I modestly style it—is being printed, but it goes on very slowly. It will be only one volume, much such a volume as one of the new edition of Professor Wilson's works. The title is to be 'Thorndale,' or 'Thorndale's Diary,'—the last title will tell you what sort of work it is.

Digitized by Google

Not a novel. But a diary admits the intermixture of some incidents with reflection. It closes with a sort of *Confession of Faith*, or view of human progress, which is a sort of continuous essay. Some will perhaps read up to this, and then drop the book; others would be satisfied with reading this last part, and leaving the rest alone. I am not at all sanguine about its success—I never have succeeded in anything,—but one must put forth what there is in one's mind, be it much or little. I was quite in earnest when I said that I should like to have a lady critic at my elbow; because it is on matters of taste, style, bits of verse, etc., that I should particularly want to consult another. And as to graver matters, although there are some few men whose opinion would be invaluable, they are very few, and quite inaccessible. Even on these I would rather have the impressions of an intelligent woman than the 'average man,' who is not at all impressible, and who is certainly not a whit wiser, or more disciplined or trained to thinking."

The following extract I give because the views it expresses about India were held by him to the end, and put out in the last article he ever wrote:—

"Yes! this terrible revolt in India must occupy all thoughts. It occupies mine a good deal, but to very little purpose. I see that the national revenge of England *must* have its course. But our Indian Empire has never been a great favourite of mine. I always looked at it as leading to much benefit, in one way or the other, to India itself, but as having little to do with the real power and prosperity of England. I myself revolt at the scheme, put forth by some writers in the *Times*, of governing India entirely by foreign troops, presuming this were possible. If the English power is not really educating Indians, so that they will assume one day an independent and permanent position amongst the nations, I really see no justification whatever for our conquests."

It was in the autumn of 1857 that 'Thorndale' appeared. On my return from the Irish tour, by which my dear mother's health had marvellously benefited,

Digitized by Google

I well remember going into an Edinburgh library in quest of some other book, and having 'Thorndale' recommended me by the librarian as a very remarkable work indeed. Before long the author sent me a copy, but I glanced over it merely; I did not read it for some months. My way of religious thinking, perhaps I should rather say of *feeling*, led me to shrink from any disturbing influence.

It was never an easy matter to convince William Smith of his own success. But if favourable, often enthusiastic, and always unbiassed criticism (for he belonged to no literary clique or mutual admiration society whatever), could afford a test, then 'Thorndale' was decidedly successful. In reference to this I will here quote a passage from an article on 'Gravenhurst' by M. Milsand, which appeared some years later in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* :—

"Je relisais dernièrement un extrait des jugemens portés par la presse sur l'avant-dernier ouvrage de M. Smith : Thorndale, ou le Conflit des Opinions. J'étais frappé du ton de tous ces jugemens. Les appréciations des juges ne s'accordaient pas. 'On respire partout,' disait l'un, 'les sentimens élevés du gentilhomme et du chrétien ;' 'l'auteur,' disait l'autre, 'est un esprit si délicatement équilibré, qu'il peut peser avec une égale justesse les opinions les plus opposées ; en somme, c'est une intelligence singulièrement sceptique et impartiale.' Mais à travers ces dissidences d'opinions on sentait chez les divers critiques la même impression d'attrait, je dirais volontiers d'allèchement. Les uns et les autres avaient été évidemment gagnés ; ils s'accordaient à représenter le livre comme une œuvre qui

Digitized by Google

demandait à être savourée à loisir, qui devait avoir été écrite lentement, écrite plutôt par intermittence et aux heures favorables, tant elle renfermait de délicieuses pensées, et tant les pensées avaient la fraicheur, et comme le duvet du premier moment."

In a note of Mr. J. S. Mill's—one of the few to whom my husband wished a copy sent,—'Thorndale' is spoken of as follows:—

"I had already read the book with great interest. As is the case with everything of yours that I have read, it seemed to me full of true thought aptly expressed, and, though not resolving many questions, a valuable contribution to the floating elements out of which the future moral and intellectual synthesis will have to shape itself. I have been much pleased, both on your account and that of the book itself, at the decided success it has met with."

My husband's contributions to *Blackwood's Magazine* were suspended from the April of 1856 to the January of 1858, when he wrote a notice of a translation I had made of Freytag's 'Debit and Credit.' His kindly encouragement was a support to me in every little effort of the sort, and during the ensuing spring our letters were very frequent. We told each other all our interests, and also all our discouragements and difficulties. I well recollect his pleasantly contrasting our lives in some such words as these: "You are in a good roomy boat, rowing hard, but with others around you; whilst I am bobbing up and down on the waves alone, with only a life-belt to trust to." Certainly a habit of confidence had been very firmly established when, on the 14th of July 1858, we met again at Patterdale, and yet neither had quite distinct or correct impressions of

Digitized by Google

the other. William often told me he could never identify the Patterdale companion with the Keswick acquaintance. Nor was I prepared for all I found in him. By this time I had indeed read 'Thorndale,' and had felt its *pathos* as keenly as its beauty. In the letters I had been accustomed to receive there was almost always an undertone of sadness; but, to my surprise, their writer was cheerful beyond any one I knew, or, at least, cheerful with a kind of cheerfulness I had never known—something akin to morning sunlight—the soaring song of larks—the sportiveness of young woodland creatures. I cannot describe it, but it effaced for me all memories of care and disappointment; it made the whole world new. Neither was he any longer inclined to be solitary. From the day of our first cordial meeting to that of my mother's and my departure we invariably took long walks, morning and evening, let the weather be what it would. When it was fine, we sought out some exquisite shade of birch-trees on high ground, with peeps of Ulleswater through the branches, or a mossy knoll overhanging a "lake-like bend of river," or a sequestered grass walk beside a most joyous brook, and in such scenes as these he would read to me by the hour,[1] or I, in my turn, would repeat poetry to him. When it was wet we put up with any shelter we could find, or talked and laughed very gaily under our umbrellas. We were not, however, always gay. The

[1] To those who knew William Smith, it is unnecessary to dwell upon the charm of his reading. His voice was singularly flexible, varied, and, above all, pathetic. He himself had an idea that he succeeded best with comic subjects, and many delighted especially in hearing him read Dickens, Sterne, etc. Yet I always grudged the *voice* to anything but poetry of a high order.

Digitized by Google

burden of loneliness was far more painful to him at this time than when he first resolved to endure it. In one of our early walks I can recall his suddenly bursting out,—"I have come to envy *any* room in which there are *two* chairs!" And we knew that the days of our present happiness were numbered, and we did not then imagine that it could by any possibility be rendered permanent! To both the future seemed dark. But before the close of those six summer weeks out of their happiness a tie had been woven, strong enough to dispense with any definite hope, to endure through whatever dividing circumstances or differing opinions; and fourteen years later, when the *last* parting was drawing very near, he could still smile as he said, "Patterdale was our Idyll."

Henceforth the constant letters took a different tone. But the new letters went to the old address, for, after we left, he soon returned to Keswick, and was occupied in preparing the second edition of 'Thorndale.' In the winter he came to Edinburgh for some weeks—came after much irresolution, and with many scruples, such as will easily be imagined in a nature so fastidiously honourable, so purely unselfish as his. On my part there were no scruples. In heart and soul, through life to death, I knew that I was his. Poverty might indeed preclude much, but *that* nothing could alter, and to be the chosen and the dearest *friend* of such a one as he, seemed to me, and, what is more remarkable, seemed to my most fond and partial mother, a high if not altogether a happy destiny. I may here quote a passage from a review by him of Gray's Letters (written four years before the time I am speaking of),

Digitized by Google

because it was verified in the life of both of us:— "How grossly do we err, indeed, when we think that youth is the especial or exclusive season of friendship, or even of love! In the experience of many it has been found that the want of the heart, the thirst for affection, has been felt far more in manhood than in early years."

The six weeks spent in Edinburgh were for him social, cheerful weeks. For the first time I saw him in society. In a gathering of strangers he would often sit silent; and I noticed, with some amusement, how any complimentary allusion to his book would embarrass him, and make him look round for a way of escape. Perhaps this may have led to his being called a shy man. I never thought the epithet descriptive. He *chose* to retire, was more swift to hear than to speak, preferred learning from others to setting them right, and was very sensitive to differences of social atmosphere. But when that atmosphere was congenial, he was more completely frank, and more invariably elicited frankness from others than sufferers from shyness can.[1] During his stay in Edinburgh we were of course much together, and my dear father now learnt in a measure to know him. I say "in a measure," for *he*, alas! was blind, and could not see the animated face, the smile which was as it were the key to the whole man; so that to those who never saw it I despair of conveying the secret of his personal influence.

[1] I recollect Dr. Robert Chambers, at whose house William once dined, observing to me, after some humorous lamentations about the universality of the name of Smith, that he had "never seen a man whom he could so soon love." Dr. Chambers could not have suspected the interest I felt in hearing him say so.

Digitized by Google

We could not now consent to long separations; the summers we might at least contrive to spend together, and therefore, breaking through the habit of years, William Smith forsook his dear Lake country, and in the May of 1859 we met at Dunkeld. During this summer a fervent protest of his against the explanation given by Dr. Mansel of 'The Limits of Religious Thought' appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and he was occupied in writing a review of Sir W. Hamilton's 'Lectures on Metaphysics.' Our talks now more frequently took an abstract character. He would lead me into his own favourite sphere of philosophical thought, and, untrained as my mind was, any receptivity it had lay in that direction. On other points, too, I could not but be insensibly modified by his companionship. But never was man more tender and reverent to the convictions of others! The following passage, written by him in 1861, with regard to the spirit evinced by M. Renan in one of his early works, exactly portrays his own habit of feeling and acting in these matters:—

"No man is more ready to admit that, whatever his own opinions may be, those opinions are as nothing when weighed against the manifest wants, tendencies, and aspirations of mankind. He knows that the attitude of mind of the incessant inquirer after truth, by which the philosopher is supposed to be distinguished, can belong only to a few. While claiming freedom for such inquirers, he has no expectation and no wish that they should take the place of teachers of the multitude. They could not give to that multitude their own thoughtfulness; they would give their doubts, but not

Digitized by Google

that spirit of inquiry which invests doubt itself with sacredness." . . . And again:—

"Not his the presumption that would project his own mind as a type for all others. . . . . He would not intentionally weaken the foundation on which the morality of more simple-minded or more imaginative men than himself is seen to rest; but the gradual permeating influence of a truth once spoken he has no wish, no power to arrest. This he believes *must* be ultimately beneficent."

During the four months spent at Dunkeld we saw more of each other than at Patterdale; for now, in addition to the two long walks, the evenings were always spent together; and when we parted, on the 16th of September, he soon to make his way back to Keswick,—of all the improbabilities that occupied our minds none were so out of the question as our being separated for long. There was an autumn meeting at Keswick, a winter meeting in London, and the 3d of May 1860 found him and me and my dear mother comfortably installed as joint-tenants of Mount Hazel, a farm-house in Carnarvonshire, not far from the coast.

For some months past William's mind had been occupied with the idea of another book, and on one of those May-days I was called into his study to listen to the introductory chapter of 'Gravenhurst.' But although he only wrote two short papers for the Magazine, the book did not get on very fast during the happy time spent, first at Mount Hazel, and then at Llanberris. Our mountain walks were so long, and we were so much together. Nothing, indeed, was materially

Digitized by Google

changed in our outward position, but obstacles weighed less upon our spirits than they had done at Dunkeld; we succeeded better, at all events, in pushing them out of sight; and the nearly five months of constant companionship had brought about a still more complete sympathy. For under his influence I could not but grow a little wiser and worthier. Parting was a great pain, but this time I think he felt it even more than I! A week later we met at the house of a dear friend, and by the middle of December—I hardly know how—we discovered that, as he phrased it, "the impossible had become possible," and that we *must* "live and work together." I will give two grave passages from the pile of joyous letters between the 14th of December and our marriage:—

"And so my dear bird was a little serious, a little sad. We should both be very shallow people if we were not a little serious. I make very serious vows to myself. I do hope that you shall never have cause for any other sadness than what comes inevitably to us all. I will 'love her, comfort her, and honour her.' I should often repeat to myself those lines—

'No more companionless
Although he trod the path of high intent,'

if I did not feel that there was a certain presumption in my talking of 'the paths of high intent.' Yet, although with little success, and very little power, I *have* always put before myself a high aim in my studies and my writings. And I should like to die still *striving*, though I get no higher than to strive." . . .

And this, in answer to words of mine disclaiming any presumptuous wish to change "the nature of my thinker's thoughts:"—

"Since I wrote, another letter came from Edinburgh, for

which I ought to thank you still more. It gave me re-assurance that my dear bird and I shall always be *en rapport.*

> 'I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honour more,'—

so runs some knightly rhyme. I, who am no knight, must substitute the word *truth* for *honour*, though it mars the verse."

In the February of 1861 I left Edinburgh, taking with me, for my only portion, my parents' blessing. We were married on the 5th of March, at St. John's Church, Notting Hill, from the house of a most dear friend, the one, perhaps, to whose noble and tender nature the kindred nature of my husband most entirely responded. Other friends, friends of childhood, of girlhood, friends of a lifetime, gathered round us. They almost all came from a distance, and many of them met again on this occasion who had not met for years. One of them—my sister in heart—described thus the impression William made upon her:—"Lucy, I should like to tell him everything that ever happened me!" All were at once completely at home with him. It was a happy beginning of a great happiness!

We spent some weeks at Hastings and at Brighton; then settled ourselves for the summer at Tent Cottage (near Coniston),—a green nest, with tall trees round, that my beloved mother shared with us. There is a line of my husband's that often recurs to my mind:—

> "It takes so little to make Earth a Heaven."

Of worldly goods, so very little! Were I to name the income that procured for us the ideal of both I should excite in some a smile of incredulity. But it is literally true that from first to last we were never conscious of a

Digitized by Google

privation—never perturbed by care. Whatever our income, we always contrived to have it in advance, and it was one of the peculiarities of my husband's character to be equally prudent and generous, a combination that much in my former life had taught me to prize. But indeed all that life now seemed to me requisite training for such "measureless content" as mine. I had had perplexity enough to enhance the rest of reliance on a perfectly sound judgment; buffeting enough to make me habitually alive to a justice and tenderness that never failed.

It was during this summer that he wrote down, on the inside of an old envelope, the following lines—an answer, I imagine, to some conventional prompting of which I must have been guilty. They are so characteristic that I give them:—

"Oh vex me not with needless cry
Of what the world may think or claim;
Let the sweet life pass sweetly by
The same, the same, and every day the same.

Thee, Nature, Thought—that burns in me
A living and consuming flame—
These must suffice; let the life be
The same, the same, and evermore the same.

Here find I taskwork, here society—
Thou art my gold, thou art my fame;
Let the sweet life pass sweetly by,
The same, the same, and every day the same."

The "sweet life" was not disturbed during the remainder of the year, but we changed its scene to Keswick—to the house where we had first met five years before,—and then to Brighton. During the

Digitized by Google

summer William had written several articles,—one for the *British Quarterly* (of which his friend Dr. Vaughan was then editor), on the poems of Mrs. Browning—poems so dear to us both that her death that summer seemed to bring personal loss and pain. While the winter sped on at Brighton, 'Gravenhurst' grew rapidly. William wrote it undisturbed by my presence—a great triumph to me—I sitting the while at another table writing too. For through the kindness of Mr. Strahan—most enterprising and liberal of publishers—I had for several years a good deal of translation to do. This was one of the finishing touches to the completeness of our life. Not to speak of my pleasure in contributing to our income, I delighted in compulsory occupation, and to see me busy over my manuscript gave my husband a more comfortable sense of security from casual remarks than he would have had if I had only been working or reading. Then, when the pen was thrown down, both enjoyed the walk all the more thoroughly, the more childishly—in both there was much of the child.

In the May of 1862 'Gravenhurst' was published, and we went to Switzerland for five months, dividing the time between Bex, Zermatt, Sixt, Chamounix, and Unterseen. It was our custom to settle down quietly at one place after another, to get its loveliness by heart, and to be free from that ruffling of equanimity bad weather may entail on the rapid tourist. Our fortnight at Zermatt stands out very prominently in my memory. The keen air and the kind of scenery exhilarated my husband to the utmost. In a manuscript book of his I find, very hastily jotted down :—" Two short, long

Digitized by Google

weeks and all my future—such is your share, Zermatt, of my life. Nowhere the torrents so grand, the snow-hills more beautifully set. I cannot describe the scene on the Görner Grat—but I recur to it and keep it alive. All pleasure—flowers, the English hare-bell, looks up from my ankle, the white Pinguicula (as if dropt from the skies upon its stalk, on which it rests rather than grows), shy as the violet and more delicate. You look up from the flower and down into the ravine. I tremble as I look below—one false step and all the beauty is gone for ever, gone for me! And see, the torrent-stream is so safe, just here is its low bed scooped in the solid rock; it is so distant as to seem quite silent. And then the village, and the cows, and the goats, and the church, and the bells; a great deal of the praying here seems done by the bells—and not badly."

What rapturous memories of our long walks those few words waken! At Zermatt, too, we made an interesting and enduring friendship. We were there early in June, and the Hôtel du Mont Cervin had only two other inmates, a young husband and wife, and their sweet child of three. The visitors' book gave their names; they were New-Englanders. We never thought it worth while to record ours, and hence in the course of two or three days Mr. Loomis, who discerned something remarkable about the man, asked William what his was. "The commonest of all English names,—William Smith." "Yes; but I like it for the sake of a favourite author." And then I broke in, inquiring, with a strong presentiment what the answer would be, which of the numberless Smiths he alluded to? "The

Digitized by Google

author of 'Thorndale.'" It was a great pleasure to me to say, "This is he." Mr. Loomis had with him the American edition of the book, which my husband saw with interest. So began a friendship and correspondence that were kept up to the last.

We had had some vague idea of spending the winter in Switzerland, but the illness of my dear father recalled us. The winter was spent at Weston-super-Mare, where we knew no one—where, from the 14th of October to the 17th of February we only spoke to each other; and never were we more cheerful than under these circumstances. The place itself had not much interest—country and sea were alike tame; but the beautiful sunsets in front of our large window were a constant source of pleasure, and we had Switzerland to remember. But, indeed, however ecstatic my husband's enjoyment of Swiss glories, it was far less exceptional than his unfailing delight in the familiar shows of earth and sky. It never was more true than of him that

> "The poet hath the child's sight in his breast,
> And sees all new. *What oftenest he has viewed,*
> *He views with the first glory.*"

As usual, during these peaceful months William was thoroughly occupied, not only in writing for the Magazine, but with psychological subjects. In the manuscript book that at that time lay upon his desk, I find much jotted down under the head of 'Knowing and Feeling.' But the one thing in him that I regretted was his habit of writing so many of his thoughts illegibly, even to himself. He would often deplore his own way of working,—extracts made, line of argument traced out,

Digitized by Google

to be referred to hereafter, and when wanted undecipherable! When a new MS. book was begun, there would be resolves to do better; but habit was too strong, the pen flew too fast, the writing (in his letters so delicate and clear) baffled the writer's own patience.

In the spring of 1863, after a little round of visits—a thing unprecedented with us—we found ourselves again in the neighbourhood of Coniston, attracted thither mainly by friends with whom, during our stay at Tent Cottage, we had entered into cordial relations, and whom we had much enjoyed meeting during our Swiss tour. One of these friends was an especially congenial companion to my husband, and his correspondent to the end. Whenever he had received any new or vivid delight from art or nature, or whenever a political or a religious movement had excited in him more than usual interest, I always knew that the sheets of note-paper I saw spread out on the little desk were destined for Miss Rigbye. She will not, I know, object to my quoting here her earliest impression of him:—

"I like to recall the first time I saw him, and the feeling that his joyous, radiant expression awakened in me—something of surprise, and wonder, and pleasure. I remember distinctly recognising that it was something I had never seen before."

During the course of this summer there fell upon me an irreparable blow,—the death within one week of both beloved parents. But my husband's presence made anguish (as I now understand the word) impossible. A few days before her sudden seizure, my mother had said to me, "Thank God, my darling, that when I am

Digitized by Google

in my grave you will have one to love you as I do!" She, better than any one, would have understood how, having all in him, even *her* loss could not darken life. My joy henceforth lacked the complete reflection it found from her sympathy, but it was "fulness of joy" still. More than ever my companion, more than ever tender—my husband seemed resolved that my nature should know no want. Part of the ensuing winter was spent in Edinburgh amid true friends; the remainder at Brighton.

The summer of 1864 was memorable to us, as being the first we spent at a house which became almost a home; I refer to Newton Place, in Borrowdale. It was a house pleasantly planned, with large windows, and rooms lofty in proportion to their size,—a house into which breeze and sunlight streamed in from the four quarters; and it was pleasantly situated, with the lake and Skiddaw in front, on either side bold wooded crags or soft grassy hills, and between us and the latter green meadows, with a river gliding silently through. It was a pleasant coincidence that this house had been somewhat coveted by me eight years before, when my mother and I occupied it for a few weeks; and that William, calling upon some friends who tenanted it, had said to himself that the drawing-room would make him a delightful study. And now we shared it. We were able to secure it to ourselves from April to December, and we had rooms to which we could welcome friends. But I will vary my chronicle of our outwardly unbroken life, by an extract from his manuscript-book of the year, suggested evidently by the quiet stream we so often watched together:—

Digitized by Google

"THE RIVER.

"Beauty here does not owe much to utility. Not many objects more beautiful or more useful, but the beauty and utility seem very distinct. The river to a very thirsty man has lost its beauty; and the farmer, who thinks more intensely than any of us of irrigation, sees very little of its charm of beauty. This lies in its motion, in its light, in its endless variety, and that curve which *displays* more of these, and suggests *life* and choice of movement."

"All beautiful things grow more beautiful by looking long at them. There is the charm of novelty; there is also the growing charm of persistency and repetition; the eye *feeds*. Indeed, dwell on *any* object, and the sentiment it is calculated to inspire augments so long as attention is unfatigued."

"See how the wind gives a ripple this way, while the stream is *that* way. Where the river bends, and one part is exposed to the wind and the other not, you would say that the stream is flowing in one direction *here*, and *there* in another direction. We must explain its apparent contradiction. Like noble minds, it leaves its inconsistencies to the *candour* or the *mistake* of others."

"This gnat upon the surface, it does not seem to me a *life*, but a fragment of life—a joy—a motion, nothing more."

"The river by its inundation obliterates itself; by overflowing becomes mere marsh. I pray that my river here will keep its bounds, and not strive to be a lake."

"There is a sodden leaf that cannot float upon the

Digitized by Google

surface, and yet has not weight enough to rest upon the ground. It moves always, but is always drawn along the *bottom of the stream*. That is *its* progress."

"How endless are the charms of a river! It has ceaseless motion, yet it suggests repose; these blurred shadows of the bank and trees are stationary, though the water is ever flowing. Motion and shadow; life and the dream of life; and the *whence* and the *whither*."

"The moss just under the stream is kept moist by the water, and yet shines in the sun. How resplendent a green! but where I see nothing but the bare stones, I find the most fascinating spectacle. There the *river of light is flowing*. On the surface the water ripples, ripples in the light; so light and shadow course each other in mimic flow along the bottom of the stream. I watch that under-stream that is no stream, and think of what *thought may be*."

"This stick half in the water, crooked to the eye, I take it out, it is straight. Delusion that the child detects, and that to the man has become an additional knowledge by his explanation of it. But the man himself, can he take himself out of the element through which he sees himself?"

The winter of 1864-65 was outwardly more varied than was usual with us. It included a stay of two months at Llandudno, in North Wales, a short visit to Bath, where my husband had an old and intimate friend and correspondent, and several weeks at Brighton; and then, after a fortnight in London, we set out early in May for Switzerland, and saw Lucerne and enchanting Engelberg in their fresh beauty, and had Pensions to

Digitized by Google

ourselves. Our other happy resting-places were Grindelwald, Unterseen, Champéry, Bex, La Comballaz. One week too was given to Chamounix, for which William had an especial affection. His deepest impressions of sublimity had been received there twenty years before, renewed in 1862; his constant nature preferred re-visiting it to exploring new scenes. Never shall I forget his lying on the ground on our return from the Chapeau one glorious August day, gazing long and silently, absorbed in wonder and worship, at what he had called "the sculpture of landscape,"—"the great hills built up, from their green base to their snowy summits, with rock, and glacier, and pine forests,"—"leading beyond this earth." Then suddenly starting from his trance of rapture he said, "Now, I don't want to see that again!" He had indeed seen it this last time in fullest perfection.

We spent five months in Switzerland. They were fraught with delight; and yet there were days—days of reaction after vivid enjoyment—when I could plainly see that my husband missed the steady occupation, the studious routine of our English summers. Had his life been prolonged, I do not think we should ever have become tourists again. During the ensuing years, remembering his own delight in Italy, and kindly anxious to give me every possible pleasure, he would often ask me whether I really wished very much to go there; because, if so, the effort would be made. But I had always a doubt as to such a journey being the best thing for him. I dared not wish it.

I will transcribe a few of the 'Scraps of Verse from a Tourist's Note-book,' which were written

Digitized by Google

during our second Swiss summer, and published in the Magazine:—

"The lightest, brightest cloud that floats
In the azure, can but throw
Some kind of shadow, dark or faint,
On whatever lies below."

For me, thank God! although I lowly lie,
I lie where earth looks straightway to the sky;
On me, remote alike from king and clown,
No fellow-atom flings his shadow down.
No shadow?—none?—Think, look again!
An hour ago that huge and rocky hill
Stood bare, unsightly; all in vain
Did mid-day light each rent and chasm fill.
It waited for the cloud. The shadow came,
Rested or moved upon its brow
And, lo! it softens into beauty now—
Blooms like a flower. With us 'tis much the same,—
From man to man, as the deep shadows roll,
Breaks forth the beauty of the human soul."

"High rise the mountains, higher rise
The clouds; the mimic mountain still,
The cloud, the cloud, say what we will,
Keeps full possession of our skies.
Let cloud be cloud, my friend; we know the wind
Shapes and re-shapes, and floats the glory on;
Glory or gloom it floats, but leaves behind
The stable mountain, open to the sun.
Let cloud be cloud—unreal as the space
It traverses; earth can be earth, yet rise
Into the region of God's dwelling-place,
If light and love are what we call his skies."

"The stream flows on, it wearies never,
Whilst I, who do but watch its flow,
I weary oft. 'Ah, not for ever!

Digitized by Google

Soon other eyes'— I know, I know,
I too repeat my 'Not for ever,'
And waking to that thought I start,
And find my weariness depart."

"I pluck the flower, one moment to behold
Its treasury of purple and of gold;
The blossom, and a nest of buds around,
Ruthless I pluck, and fling them on the ground.
Plucked because fair, then flung to death away!
I might have stooped and looked, and had a blameless joy.
Nature's great prodigality, you say,
E'en for man's wantonness provides.
It may be so, but still with me abides
A sense of shame that I could so destroy."

"The stream to the tree—I shine, you shade,
And so the beauty of the world is made."

Our second Swiss tour, like our first, was succeeded by several months of exclusively *tête-à-tête* life at Weston-super-Mare, and I was soon happily convinced that the spell of the desk had in no way been weakened by our wanderings. William wrote a long 'Review of J. S. Mill's Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy,' confining himself chiefly to that "central position in which the great question is discussed of the nature and origin of our knowledge of the external world." To those who know his writings it is needless to indicate the side he took in the controversy. He "selected to be totally wrong" (according to Mr. Mill) "with Sir William Hamilton rather than exchange our real world of matter and motion, of substance and force, for permanent possibilities of sensation attached to nothing at all—for mere thoughts of sensations,—a

Digitized by Google

dreary and bewildering idealism." My husband's mind was at this time constantly engaged with the problems the book in question treats of, but a remark he made with regard to Sir W. Hamilton—"He loved *thinking over the book* better than *thinking over the pen*"—was just then applicable to himself. The manuscript book grew full, but during our stay at Weston-super-Mare nothing else was written. We left it with tender regret, as we always did any place where we had been quite alone—left it for an interval of social life in Edinburgh, and in the February of 1866 found ourselves once more at Newton Place. During the eleven months that we spent there we had very frequently guests—dear young nieces, dear old friends—of mine originally, but now of his, for he adopted them heartily, and not any of them, I know well, have forgotten or will forget the simple cordiality of his welcome. It is true that the prospect of any interruption to our duality was sometimes perturbing to the student, who loved his regular work and his habitual ways; true that when those even we best loved left and we returned to each other, I heard the words that above all words made my heart leap with joy:—"Now I have my ideal of life." But none came to us who were not friends indeed, we had no surface acquaintance, no conventional sociality, and at the close of every visit we received we found ourselves enriched by pleasant memories and enlarged interests. Early in 1867 we made our winter flight to Brighton, and for the summer fixed ourselves at Barmouth, in North Wales—a place to which my husband had never before been, though he had chosen it for the scene of one of the episodes in 'Thorndale.'

Digitized by Google

We had a snug little cottage to ourselves, perched just above the estuary, on the other side of which rose the range of Cader Idris. The place suited my husband's health, and as usual we were fortunate in a landlady, whose kindliness and care for us gave a sense of comfort and security very precious to both. We should have been, I believe, unduly pained by an opposite experience, but during our married life we never encountered it. My husband's unvarying consideration for the claims and the feelings of all brought into contact with him, as well as his self-helpfulness and punctuality, made him the most popular of lodgers. Looking over my diaries, whatever year I take up seems to have been the happiest! William was much occupied, I remember, this particular summer with scientific subjects. One of the papers that he wrote for the Magazine was a review of a work of Émile Saigey's, treating of the 'Unity of Natural Phenomena.' I think the closing paragraphs will interest some who read these pages :—

"What if the movements of suns and planets, about which so many theories have been devised, should at last be studied in the movements of the molecule? The movements of suns and systems may be but results or examples of those two movements of rotation and translation with which we found it necessary to endow every atom from the commencement.

"Need we add that we have still to ask how atoms came to be endowed with these movements, and were brought into all these rhythms or harmonies? Need we add that our last and boldest generalizations only make the necessity more glaring to supplement the

Digitized by Google

atom and its movement with the great idea of Intelligential Power?

> "God, and the atom, and the soul of man,
> Something we seem to know of all the three—
> Something—and only—always—of the Three!"

We were seven months at Barmouth. What memories arise of grave and tender talk during sunset strolls along the quiet sands, while the distant Carnarvonshire mountains stood out lilac against a "daffodil sky;" of glad morning rambles, after morning work, over hills gorgeous with furze and heather; of rapid pacing up and down the bridge, watching the flowing or the ebbing rush of the tide! We had a good many brief visits from different friends during the summer; but we were much alone too. The winter found us in Edinburgh.

During our stay there one of our peculiar interests lay in attending together, every Sunday morning, a rather singular service held by a Mr. Cranbrook in the Hopetoun Rooms. Mr. Cranbrook had been originally, I believe, an Independent minister, but at the time I speak of he had seceded from that body. We never knew his history with exactness, but heard of him as an earnest thinker, following at any cost after what he deemed truth. He was then evidently in ill-health, and had the wistful look of one "led by the Spirit" into a *desert*. His congregation was small; but loving hands always placed flowers on each side of the desk before him. His sermons were generally critical; but in his prayers the emotional nature of the man came out. We found the contrast between the cold analytical tone of his preaching and the passionate cry of

Digitized by Google

his heart deeply pathetic, and came away with much to talk over during our Sunday morning walk. To me it was always an unspeakable interest to go with my husband to a place of worship. I never saw there a demeanour quite the same as his,—he sat so still, there was such reverent attention in his fixed glance. It was not often that I had this experience; compromises and conformity to custom formed no part of his religion; but he laid down no rule for others; could understand how in them memories and affections might hold together old habits and changed opinions; never charged their intellectual inconsistency with dishonesty. When I returned from church, he liked me to tell him what I had heard, and if a deepened sense of things unseen and a desire to live more in accordance with the highest standard be the best results of religious teaching, then it was his comments that most helped me. I, on my side, reverenced the law of his higher nature, unflinchingly obeyed and rewarded openly by a transparent simplicity, a *reality* in look, and speech, and gesture, that all *felt* the influence of, and which his venerable friend Dr. Brabant once referred to in these words:—"When I am with your husband I feel in the presence of absolute truth."

In the January of 1868 we left Edinburgh for our dear Newton Place, and some of our kind friends thought it an injudicious move. But even in winter we enjoyed it thoroughly. Perhaps never more than then, when mighty winds swooping down from Scawfell tossed and twisted our protecting trees and shook the walls of our dwelling as they passed us by, or when heavy rains had turned our meadows into a lake,

Digitized by Google

and flooded roads shut us most completely in. To the happy, storm is as exhilarating as sunshine, and I used to liken our secluded life to a full glass of champagne, into which—drop the merest trifle, it effervesces anew. A book, a magazine, sent by a friend, a parcel from the London library, the arrival of proof to correct, etc., still more, any natural spectacle—northern lights, frost-work, falling snow—anything, everything, was pleasure-able excitement. On such winter evenings my husband would often take me from room to room of our dwelling "to show me" the moon, or moon-lit clouds, or the starlight splendour in different parts of the sky. And after standing long in silence together gazing at the silent stars, he would turn from their oppressive magnificence with such words as these:—"Love must be better than Hate in all worlds!" So much was certain. While thus alone, from the first hour of rising—when I could hear him "singing, dancing to himself"—to the winding up of our evening by some game of chess or cards, all was conscious enjoyment. I cannot convey to those who did not know him, or knew him but slightly, the variety of his playfulness, the delicate humour that gave charm and freshness to "every day's most quiet need by sun and candle-light." I suppose it required a heart like his, "moored to something ineffable, supreme," and an entire absence from personal anxieties, enmities, ambitions. I only know that this "spirit of joy" that he felt and diffused was, as far as my experience goes, unique, and no sketch of his character that did not lay stress upon it could be in any degree complete.

This year, 1868—our 'Annus Mirabilis' as he some-

Digitized by Google

times called it—was the most social of all our years. For several months we had a succession of dear friends, some of them eminently congenial companions to my husband; and between their coming and going, intervals of our *own* life. William was well and strong; the seasons were all unusually fine; in autumn the hills were one sheet of golden bracken, such as we never saw before or since; the leaves hung later on his beloved birch-trees, and our mountain walks were longer than usual.

It was in the February of 1869, when we were back again at Brighton, that, for the first time, I saw my husband really ill. True, it was only, as we supposed, an attack of influenza, nor did he once allow it to interfere with his rising at the usual hour and walking out on all dry days. But an entry in my diary tells that he was "suddenly seized with a shivering-fit, of course succeeded by fever and such prostration of energy as I had never witnessed in him. The day passed, and he did not once sit at the dear, familiar little desk; dozed off over the book in his hand, always, however, rousing himself to give the sweetest smile and say some sweet words." It was the first draught of the bitter cup, but this time it passed away, and before a fortnight was over no trace of illness seemed left; the step was as elastic, the eye as bright as before.

We had debated with ourselves whether to spend the following summer in Derbyshire or Cornwall; but I had a longing to see the Atlantic break on the Bude shore, having read of the waves rising there to an unusual height, and my husband, to whose more occupied

Digitized by Google

mind place was less important, allowed my preference to prevail. It was a long journey to take, to a spot quite unknown to us, where, of course, we should not have a single acquaintance. I think I never set out in a greater ferment of delight than on that bright April day! But Bude is a place that has its wrong side, "a bare, sandy common, and an ugly canal;" and my husband's first impression of it, given in a letter to a dear niece, was, "that a more dreary region could not be discovered in all England," and that, "had he fallen upon it alone, he should have been off like a shot the next morning." However, a little accident that befell me immediately on my arrival (the falling of a sashless window on my hands) so distressed him as to "make it impossible to growl at the place," and its own peculiar charm soon asserted itself. Later on he writes to the same niece:—"These ground-swells of the Atlantic will spoil me for any other seas. On the coast of Sussex and Kent I have seen grand seas, but I was blinded or blown away in the attempt to look at them, and the waves were generally dark and turbid. On this coast I have seen waves as lustrous and clear as the waters of the Lake of Geneva rising in all the grand forms of a storm."

Our small abode at Bude was not so quiet as we could have wished, but William at once set about writing on a subject that had long been occupying his mind: 'Knowing and Feeling.' The illusion that, as I take up one pocket-book after another, makes the year therein recorded seem of all our years the best, comes over me strongly as I dwell on our Bude life. The bold cliffs, where always there was a renovating

Digitized by Google

breeze, short flower-filled turf for our feet, and a glorious semicircle of sea below us, where, as we stood or sat near the edge, great gulls would come soaring up from the shore, not seeing us till close by, then calmly slant off—their wide wings foam-white in the sunshine; or whence we watched the ravens that had their nests in the rocks below, tumble fantastically in the air,—*how* these things delighted him! The peaceful days were all made up of thinking, writing, and of four short rambles on common or shore. He took no long walks, felt no inclination for them; but we heard that the air of the place often disposed to lassitude, and our landlady—struck at first, as indeed strangers usually were, with his look of fragility—told me she and her neighbours noticed a marked improvement as the weeks went on. The summer brought us a dear young niece; and General and Mrs. Cotton, whose presence in Borrowdale had been a delight the previous summer, now spent three weeks at Bude. William, very busily engaged with his own thoughts and pen, only joined in one excursion—that to Tintagel. In a letter to his niece Clara he says:—

"I was very glad that I went. It was a kind of scenery somewhat novel to me. At Tintagel you stand on a rock—500 feet above the level of the sea—which juts out, and enables you to command a magnificent view of both sides of this beautiful coast. What makes the chief charm of the view are the grand, isolated rocks that rise at some little distance from the shore out of the blue sea. These assume various shapes, and all beautiful. But perhaps the greatest novelty at Tintagel were the caves. In one of these the greenest of ferns had grown over the roof in the most delectable way, and the colour of the rocks was to me quite surprising—all the colours of the

Digitized by Google

richest marbles—dark red, green, yellow, but a sort of dull, deep purple being the prevailing tint. In another cave it was not the colours one admired, but the admirable proportions, the lofty roof, the *form* of the whole. In this second cave we saw a spectacle I shall never forget. The cave led through to the ocean. It was the calmest and brightest of days, but there was a *ground swell,* and the magnificence of the waves as they filled for a moment the whole entrance to the cave, then dashed up the spray to the roof, was something to remember for ever."

From the 10th of September to the 5th of January we were quite alone, and the little desk was soon permanently installed in the joint sitting-room. As usual, I have no outward events to record. A wonderfully high tide had been predicted for the 6th of October, such as would lay half Bude partially under water; but there was no wind that night, and we watched the calm sea flow in—the village lights reflected in its perfect stillness—flow in and turn, having spread no further than at the September spring-tides. I confess I was disappointed; but William, who never had any craving for the abnormal, was heartily glad that the low-lying houses should escape the anticipated discomfort. One day we saw the rocket apparatus used, but only in the way of practice. This was a novel sight to both, and a great interest. The sunsets grew finer as autumn advanced, and we invariably went out to watch them. Even in December we could sit in the shelter of the rocks without any fear of chill. The morning and evening hours were occupied by the projected treatise on 'Psychology;' I used sometimes to doubt whether the critic would ever let the author finish it! But however intent my husband might be on this or other abstruse subjects, he was never ren-

Digitized by Google

dered absent-minded, never so much as let the fire go out while he was writing, and the moment the pen was laid down the brow was all smoothness, the eye all light, and he as ready to listen to any triviality his companion might have to impart as to share his own trains of thought with her.

We left Bude, as I have said, early in January, left it for Bath, and there spent three weeks under the roof of my husband's old and true friend, Mrs. Haughton. In my pocket-book for this year he wrote, "A new decade; the old wish: may it be a repetition of the last!" There had been several entries of the kind: "May we have no new years, only the old ones back again;" "May the new year be happy as the old," etc. As we purposed spending the following spring and summer in the North, at our dear Newton Place, we fixed upon Edinburgh for the few intervening winter weeks. Again in February he had for three days a very sharp attack of illness, of cold merely, as we thought. Yet, looking back, I see too plainly the significance of one night of fever and breathlessness, that made him fear he was going to be asthmatic like his father, and after which he rose looking *fearfully* ill, though in a few hours that appearance passed off. Looking back, I notice too a greater reluctance to go into society, but at the time there were many ways of accounting for this; one, that I was greatly occupied with a dearly-loved invalid friend, and spent all my evenings with her.

March found us once more at Newton Place. If these happy records be found monotonous, they are soon about to close. This year my husband published in the *Con-*

Digitized by Google

temporary two articles on 'Knowing and Feeling,' and wrote two papers for *Blackwood's Magazine.* One of these was upon Dr. Noah Porter's work on the 'Human Intellect,' for which he had, and expressed, high appreciation, and which generally lay upon his writing-table. I need hardly say that he also read much. What and how he read shall be described in words of his own, written long years before, and true to the end :—

"The books of a speculative man lie open quite tranquilly before him, the page turns slowly—they are the things that set his own thoughts in motion, and with those thoughts, whether the books lie there or not, he is chiefly engaged. What he reads is all along so mingled with and modified by his own reflections, that at the end of his labours he can scarcely tell what was his own and what the author's. The written words on the page have been like music to a thoughtful man, which prompts and accompanies his long reverie, but itself is little heeded. Even when heeded most, and carefully weighed and scrutinized, the words he reads are still the mere utterance of a thought that has thus been carried to him; they are not the utterance of this or that man, and bear on them nothing of motive or character. Whilst the historian, in proportion as he prosecutes his labours, recalls and re-animates some scene of past existence, and adds detail to detail till it almost appears to be again a portion of the living world, the philosophic or metaphysic labourer, who is in search of first principles, and is exploring with this purpose the furthest recesses of the human mind, departs at every step more completely from all detail and every familiar object, and gains as the result of his toil some

Digitized by Google

abstract truth, if truth it be, which after all no man seems to care for but himself. Like the celebrated traveller whose ambition it was to detect the source of the Nile, he leaves behind him the broad stream with its fertile and populous banks, whereon city and temple have been built—he bends his devoted course to where the river of life grows more and more narrow, more and more silent as he proceeds—and at length stands alone, in brief and troubled rapture over a discovery which may still be dubious, and in which no one participates."

I think I may as well sum up our summer in an extract from an irregularly-kept diary of mine:—

"*July the* 28*th*, 1870. . . . Here we have been for more than four months, for half our appointed time. And hitherto it is passing sweetly, as former summers have passed in this almost home. Visits from different friends have been much enjoyed by me, because I have had my *conditions of enjoyment:* William has been well, and occupied thoroughly and energetically. . . . The days are all too short. And as they fly by, they bring an ever deepening consciousness of the peerless treasure of living with one so entirely beloved and loveable,—with so large an intellect, so gracious a nature![1] *Never* does word of detraction or spite cross *his* dear lips; *never* is he hasty, unjust, uncandid, unwise in thought or word. He *ought* to be an elevating influence. I ought to be better. We have been all surrounded by hay—the last fragrant cartful from the meadows will now be soon carried off, and of late we have had exquisite summer. The one *apparent* cloud

[1] It may be asked,—"What were the faults, the drawbacks?" I answer now, as I should have done then, "*I do not know them.*"

Digitized by Google

over our little lives is that which darkens millions—this horrible, appalling war. Sometimes one feels it almost wrong to be so happy."

This is the last of the happy entries in that book. Certainly in the early autumn my husband was for a while less uniformly well than usual—teased with nettlerash, less up to long walks. Yet there seemed nothing to alarm—though I remember his saying one day when we were talking over our Swiss rambles of five years before—"I could not do those things now. *La Santé* is going down." And then in his tender pity he instantly added, "Let us hope only very gradually." I cannot retrace the slow and stealthy course of his illness. *I cannot*—I did so more than a year ago, and that account, with a few additions, shall be repeated here:—

In the October of 1870 we were planning a week's visit to Coniston, not only to see the autumn beauty of its woods—far richer than ours in Borrowdale—but to renew pleasant walks and talks with our friends there. Everything was arranged—our lodgings secured, our packing done. In the night my husband had a shivering-fit. I foresaw a cold, feared the risk of a journey, and begged that the visit might be given up. But no cold followed, no appearance of illness of any kind. In November a similar shivering-fit recurred. I then took alarm. It seemed to me that the flooded meadows around us might have something to do with these attacks,—that these new symptoms, feverishness without a cold, were probably aguish. He consented, at the expiration of the term of nine months, for which he had taken Newton Place, to move to Aberdovey (a

Digitized by Google

sheltered sea-side spot in North Wales), instead of lingering on in our favourite quarters till early in January, as he had purposed doing. After this second shivering-fit on the 4th of November, William looked ailing for two or three days, but then seemed quite to recover his normal condition. The third shiver on the 1st of December was slighter, and the following day he walked to Keswick and back, seven miles, without fatigue. The fourth attack was at Aberdovey, in the night of the 18th of December. This was very disappointing, and I began to fear *place* might not have had to do with these shivering-fits,—that the flooded meadows were not so much in fault as some obscure constitutional cause. Yet his sweet cheerfulness, the alacrity of his every movement, his unimpaired appetite and bright look,—all these seemed incompatible with danger. From this time the records of disturbed nights become very frequent in my diaries. He was never a very good sleeper, however. While at Aberdovey, he took long walks on the fine sands, encountered the coldest east winds without the least reluctance or apparent injury. I had indeed hours of anxiety, but then from the time I gave him my heart and soul at Patterdale no transient ailment of his ever failed to make me anxious—to hint to me what anguish might be. While we were at Aberdovey in February there came another of those mysterious shivers; yet when we moved to Brighton the end of that month, none of his friends thought him looking ill. Thinner, slightly thinner, he certainly was, and knew himself to be. Towards the end of April, after an immunity of nearly ten weeks, a very severe shivering-fit occurred in the

Digitized by Google

night. Yet though he looked yellow and ill the next day, I was less rather than more uneasy; for I had now seen several of these attacks pass over him without, as it appeared, any material harm ensuing. I may mention that the tenth anniversary of our marriage (the 5th of March 1871) found us at Brighton. I had been spending three or four days with a dear friend in London, but returned on the Saturday, in spite of a great possible treat on the Sunday (luncheon with Mr. and Mrs. Lewes), because that Sunday was our dear anniversary, and I could not have borne it to find us separated. This time its return made us low. Ten years! There was something solemn about the closing of that term. My own depression during several of those March days was quite unusual, and I remember his saying to me, "Ten years! I used to think if I could have *ten* happy years! And I have had them." And in the January of 1871 he had put in my pocket-book, where he always wrote my name, "One happy decade over—will another, will half of another, be granted?" Till then these inscriptions had been so joyous.

We had agreed that it might be well to spend our next summer in a bracing climate. We resolved upon Ilkley in Yorkshire, and arrived there on the 11th of May. The place did not attract us, but still we thought of settling down there. Some delay in accepting his offer on the part of our landlady gave us time to revert in thought to our dear Borrowdale. The fact of the shivering-fits having recurred thrice by the sea had removed from our minds all suspicion of Lake-country climate having to do with them. My husband

Digitized by Google

assured me he thought he should be quite as well there; that possibly Ilkley might prove too cold in autumn. I do believe his kind wish that I should enjoy the society of dear friends who were to spend their summer in Borrowdale influenced him; but oh, I am *sure* that *I* had no wish that could even *exist* in presence of my absorbing wish that he should be in the best place for his own health and enjoyment! But we neither of us *took* to Ilkley. He seemed well, but not *peculiarly* well there. *Never* shall I forget one misty grey evening when we stood watching the sun set behind the low hills, and he, his dear eyes fixed wistfully on the west, said, as though thinking aloud, "The summers will be few." I think, however, this was less the language of definite apprehension than of that vague yearning melancholy we all know. When the die was cast, the charm of the moors began a little to gain upon us; but we could not have secured a house to his taste, and he was even more pleased than I to find himself again in the old home, the favourite study. Eleven days of intense enjoyment succeeded. He at once sat down to the little desk in the old corner, and rapidly wrote the last article of his that ever appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*—one on the 'Coming Race.' I remember his saying one day as he laid down the book, "I should not wonder if it was written by Bulwer." I occupied myself meanwhile with giving to the little room where I sat during his busy morning hours, more of a home look than heretofore (indeed, we planned making Newton Place more of a permanent home, and collecting there all our small and scattered possessions), and so I sent for books long left in Edinburgh, for

Digitized by Google

William's bust, etc. We had blissful walks to see all his favourite haunts in their fresh beauty; we were never more gaily, light-heartedly happy. On the evening of the 5th of June I walked into Keswick, and on the way back I met him. He was coming along so *very* quickly, looked so *boyish*, I may say, in figure and tread, I could hardly believe at a distance it was he; but soon I saw the white teeth shine out—saw the radiant smile that always greeted me, and never more fully realized the old ever-new joy of putting my arm through his, and hearing and telling all that an interval of three hours (a long interval to my consciousness) had brought for each. He had had a visit from his friend Dr. Lietch. "Did Dr. Lietch think him looking well?" "Yes; he had noticed that he seemed in very good health." That verdict was another delight. There was nothing to disquiet me that summer evening! In the night a very protracted shivering-fit came on. The following day he was really ill. And now began a period of restless wretchedness, upon which I hardly know how to dwell—restless wretchedness of my own only; for while fever-fit followed fever-fit, and began visibly to sap his strength, he never admitted that there was any necessity for alarm, and strenuously resisted advice or change of place. In a letter to a niece written at this time, I mention that when most suffering he would only stroke my face and say, "I am so sorry for *you*." But a remarkable strength of will pitted itself against the malady. He would not give in. After a sleepless night (burning skin and flying pulse) he would still rise early, still take his cold bath, still carry on all the habits of health—even to the sitting at the desk and trying

Digitized by Google

hard to read and think as usual. I fear I wearied him with supplications and prayers that he would go to some milder climate, and above all consult some first-rate physician. For my own fears were now fully roused, and I thought this obscure disease might yet be taken in time—if not, that the dear life would be thrown away. During these miserable weeks we had flying visits from four friends who loved and valued him so truly they could not resist coming over from London, Wales, etc., to form their own impressions of his case. Of these friends two were gravely apprehensive, one was *sanguine* of recovery, and the other, though anxious, because of the obscurity of the case, could not trace any signs of actual danger. There was no suffering at this or any time, except, indeed, the *malaise* of fever, of which he still made light. Daily he went out, often took the drive to Keswick in a public car. In the open air he always felt and looked comparatively well. From the 24th of July to the 26th of September, although the hands were often hot and dry, and the nights much disturbed by the cough which attended lying on the right side, there was no shivering-fit; he improved in appearance, and every one thought he was quite recovering. Even I was hopeful; even to me the old joy returned in great measure. At the end of September came two shivering fits, but they were not succeeded by illness, and October passed over us bringing, as it seemed, still further amendment. His mental energy was unimpaired, his power of writing,[1] his spirits, had entirely returned;

[1] It was during this happy respite that William wrote his last article —on Mr. Greg's Political Essays. Originally intended for the Magazine, with the views of which, however, it was not found quite in accord—it appeared in the *Contemporary* of June 1872. I give its

Digitized by Google

the most marked difference was that he did not run upstairs two steps at a time, as till this summer he had invariably done. A dear friend who had not seen him for more than a year, and who now paid us a brief visit, saw nothing in his *appearance* to alarm, was not even struck with his increased thinness, and I believe secretly thought my accounts of his illness had been exaggerated by affection. But it is affection that is clear-sighted.

Early in November William caught cold. It did not threaten to be even a severe cold; but just when I was

closing paragraphs,—a fitting last utterance for one always so reverent of labour, and so interested in the progress of the labouring classes :—

"No one doubts, we presume, that in spite of fluctuating or oscillating movements, or long-stationary periods, there is observable through the past ages a progress of humanity. And since this progress, speaking broadly, is one with the enlarged scope and increased activity of the human mind, and especially with that activity which increases actual knowledge of nature and ourselves, and since this mental activity cannot be expected to come suddenly to an end, since the increase of knowledge, especially of external nature, seems at this hour to be advancing with accelerated speed, we may surely predict that there is yet a course of progressive development lying before us. Of what precise nature, it would indeed be hazardous to predict. The knowledge yet to be acquired, the additional inventions and expedients of a future age, its modified passions, its new sentiments, cannot be known to us now. But we know that scientific knowledge, as a general rule, leads to improvements in industrial art, and thus multiplies those products which render life agreeable and civilized. A larger number enjoying all those advantages of temperate pleasure and healthful occupation, of amenity of manners and culture of mind, which only a minority enjoys at present—this alone would be an immense progress, and this we may venture to prophesy.

"It is as if the student of botany and vegetable physiology had the growth of a plant exhibited before him up to a certain point, and had to predict *how it would grow on.* Something he has gathered of the laws of vegetable growth, and he doubts not that it will grow higher and put forth fresh leaves like those which it has already produced. But let us say this plant has not yet blossomed, how is he to fore-

Digitized by Google

rejoicing over its passing away, on the night of the 9th a terrible shivering-fit came on. From this time his illness—I can now see—steadily advanced. But while what *is* the irrevocable past was still the fluctuating present, there were gleams of hope. O how many hopes I was called upon to surrender! He now began to lay more stress upon this persistent fever than he had ever before consented to do, and to notice the decline of his strength. He *consented* to leave Borrowdale for Brighton on the 1st of December; sea-air we thought might be of use, and there further advice was

tell what the blossom will be, or what the last fruit will be? The student of humanity is in some such position. He has half the growth before him; how is he to predict the other half? Precisely he cannot. But he, too, knows something of the laws or method of human growth. Like the botanist, he can say of this plant that it will grow higher, and expand its branches, and multiply its leaves. What if there is a blossom and a fruitage yet to come? Of that he can say nothing. An evolution still in the future cannot enter into science, since it does not enter into knowledge at all.

"Even this superficial and rapid survey of what may be acquired by *studying man in history*, may indicate how such acquisitions may aid or guide or console us, when we are involved in certain of our social and political problems. We find the artisan and the labourer urging their claim to be admitted within the inner circle of civilized life. They urge it rudely, perhaps prematurely; they occasion alarm and consternation by their clamour and their threats. Nevertheless that they do urge their claim is a good augury. It is the right desire, and indicates that some step has been already made towards its fulfilment. And that general progress of society in art and knowledge, on which we can most securely calculate, is of such a nature as to guarantee its future fulfilment. The movement is one not to be absolutely and resolutely opposed, but the statesman's task is to moderate, guide, and render it safe. Task hard enough, it must be admitted. Much turmoil and many terrors will probably attend the movement. But if ultimately what is most refined and enjoyable in human life should be participated in by the hand-worker as well as the head-worker, this would not only be the extension of culture and happiness, but it would put our civilisation on a broader and safer basis."

Digitized by Google

to be had. He bore the journey well, slept well during our one night in London, and when we got to Brighton about two the following day, went as usual down to the shore, just to have a peep at the sea before our three-o'clock dinner, while I prepared his sister-in-law and loving nieces for his look of extreme illness; for the repeated feverish attacks during November had reduced him extremely, and the complexion was dark and sallow. Still the bright, sweet smile, that only got brighter and sweeter to the last, the animated manner, and above all, the interest he took in everything and everybody but his own self and his own state, prevented his friends from realizing that he was dangerously ill. He was disappointed to find that instead of strengthening him, Brighton seemed rather to weaken, and sometimes he regretted that he had left the Lake-country home. But still, during December, he was able to walk three miles and more. However, since change of place did not work improvement, he *did* consent to see a medical friend,—one who knew his constitution, and took the kindliest interest in his case. Here was the rising of another hope! Tonics, opiates—these he had made no trial of—perhaps the system would respond to these! The year ended with just a ray of light; yet it was some time about its close that he one day said suddenly to me: "Oh, Lucy, we will go off together to the country, have done with medicines and doctors, and there we will calmly and quietly await the inevitable end, and we will love each other to the last." (I wonder now how I bore the agonizing terror of those days, as I should have wondered then how days of solitude and vain yearning such as these could be borne!)

Digitized by Google

And in my pocket-book for 1872, his last entry of my name is accompanied by these ominous words, "The new year has less of hope, but more of love and gratitude, than any of its predecessors."—Tonics and opiates we soon found only destroyed his appetite, and did not avert the dreaded shivering-fits. About the middle of January fever began to come on every morning after breakfast. The nights were invariably broken; lying on the right side became more and more impossible because of the cough induced; but, strange to say, loss of sleep did not seem to make him worse; on the contrary, I often noticed that the better the night the more languid the day. But those anxious nights were not all unhappy; he used to be not merely cheerful, but playful, during those sleepless hours. Nothing provoked a gesture or tone of impatience, still less a complaint; it was always the alleviations on which he dwelt:—How comfortable the bed, the room, the fire-light! how delicious the beaten-up egg and sherry; how pleasant to have the candle lit and laid beside him; how pleasant to be warmly wrapped up, and to have book or newspaper given him to read for an hour or so! It was about the middle of January that he began to find the walks he had persistently taken "do him more harm than good," tire him overmuch, and he now gladly consented to the drives his dear niece Clara was only too happy to offer him. In the days of health he preferred his own light, rapid walking to the most luxurious of carriages; now the daily drive with the sweet, affectionate companion—tender to him as a daughter, with whom he had all the ease of a father, could speak or be silent at will—this became the

Digitized by Google

greatest refreshment and pleasure. Oh, I thankfully record everything that made this last illness easier to him! In our happy days we had all, and abounded; now, when we might for the first time have discovered that we were poor, loving hearts made their wealth minister to his comfort. How he used to watch for "the dear grey horses"! In this way he got the fresh air, and saw the sea and the clouds. And when he came in, and had taken his luncheon, there was always an interval of comparative strength, and a short walk could still be enjoyed. It was on the night of the 22d of January that a shivering-fit of peculiar intensity reduced my husband to such a degree of weakness that he, for the first time, allowed me to remain in the room to help him while dressing. For the first time I became *fully* aware of the extent of his emaciation, and in my misery I besought him to try at least what homœopathy might avail in a case evidently not calculated for other treatment,—Dr. Allen, the kind friend who had hitherto attended him, gladly consenting. He, it appeared, had had no hope from the first. In his opinion the lungs were obscurely affected. Dr. Hilbers, the homœopathic physician, thought the defective action of the heart was the chief danger. One thing was certain —I see it now—*daily he wasted.* In the middle ages it might have been supposed that his waxen effigy was being slowly melted by some cruel witchcraft, so singular and anomalous the case. If consumption of the lungs, then many of its characteristic symptoms were wanting: no expectoration, no night-perspirations, no pain in the side, no physical disagreeables such as would have distressed his exceeding fastidious refine-

Digitized by Google

ment. Only the fever in the morning, for the hour or two after breakfast, when the book fell from the languid hand, and he dozed, oppressed by an "unaccountable weakness," yet always willing to rouse himself to take his (fortunately) tasteless medicine, to give kind looks and words in return, to get ready for his drive. The afternoons were the best part of the day—the afternoons and the evenings. And during these he had frequently visits from congenial friends. One was a Mr. Carpenter, a remarkable man, philosopher and philanthropist,—a man of most active benevolence and most fervent piety (not of the dogmatic kind), who had valued my husband's works before he came to know and still more highly value him. Mr. Carpenter's visits were always a pleasure; and the two would discuss politics and general questions with quite eager earnest. One day in February, Professor Maurice, an early friend of William's, not met for many years, made him a long call.[1] During

[1] My husband wrote the following account of this meeting to Miss Rigbye on the 15th of February. The handwriting shows how weak he already was:—

". . . I had an interview the other day with a clergyman of a very different stamp. I was honoured by a call from Professor Maurice, who was here in Brighton for a few days. He was looking remarkably well. Old age has only improved his expression. His white hair and the soft expression of his eyes made a charming picture. Whether his physical health responded to this appearance I cannot say. He has the Professorship of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge, and also a living at Cambridge. I congratulated him on a Professorship so suitable to his tastes and acquirements. 'Yes, well,' he said, 'if any one would come to hear.' It is only in some rare cases compulsory, and young men at Cambridge pretty well limit themselves to what tells on their *examination*. This he looks upon as a great evil, and I have myself always humbly thought that the system of competitive examination was carried to a baneful extent. He regretted that the colleges for women would be regulated on the same

Digitized by Google

these winter months my husband had not only constant visits from two loved nieces, but he saw something of three of his favourite nephews, and much enjoyed getting them to talk of their own lives. Never did he dwell upon himself—never in health, never in illness! He was self-forgetting to a degree I have not seen nor shall see equalled. It was the childlike attitude of listener that bright intelligence usually chose to occupy. Yet sometimes, through all the weakness, there would be bursts of energy on some general subject—a kindling of the old fervour against some social wrong or political blunder. Oh how hard it was to realize that so much light was so soon to be quenched! And indeed there were some signs of improvement during the month of February.[1] Appetite returned; he enjoyed the food he took; there were many days when recovery did not seem to be *impossible.* I had

falsetto system as that for young men, and the ambition of standing first and in the first class would take the place of a real love of study —of knowledge for its sake."

[1] Those who have taken an interest in this account so far—an account only meant for friends—will best understand my husband's state from his own description of it in part of a letter to a beloved Edinburgh friend, Mrs. Stirling, written on the 16th of February:—

"If you or other friends were to call on me some afternoon, you would find me cheerful, delighted to converse, looking fairly well. The debility in my limbs would not betray itself, and I should give the impression that I was a mere sham. You would report me very well. Meanwhile, this distressing debility and this haunting fever keep their ground, and the next day I perhaps sit like a stock or stone. I mention this that you may know what value to put on the too frequent accounts of my dear L——. How kind, how anxious, how angelic she is! Patience, and a more genial air flowing over me, is my hope. We have been stirred to think of *Nairn*, and I have received such accounts that, were it not for the long journey, we should close at once.—Yours very gratefully, W. S."

Digitized by Google

seen my mother, when several years older than William, recover from greater prostration and apparently an equal amount of anomalous illness. Neither did Dr. Hilbers (who was kinder than I can express) forbid me all hope. He once spoke, in answer to a question of mine as to *months*, of my "possibly having him for years." Sometimes he would tell me, with a beaming smile, that the pulse was better, that he was "satisfied." I do not think, however, that I ever *had* any hope of actual recovery. I think I knew "by the love that was in my heart" what the end would be. But not how near. We had many dreams of another summer —talked of Ilfracombe, Aberystwith; once of Nairn; nay, once of Mentone! I am glad he had those floating thoughts, very thankful that the knowledge of how ill he was was mercifully kept back, or at least was not abidingly present to him. Certainly he grew more rather than less hopeful. But then I cannot distinguish between what he spontaneously felt and what he wished to feel out of his tender compassion for me. On the 19th of February we went to London together; he to receive his yearly dividends at the bank. The little trip entailed no fatigue; and though it often flashed across me that it might be our last, I think we were both rather cheered by it. That evening we counted up our income for the year to come, and he said "that everything was pleasant done together." I never knew in any man quite so felicitous a blending of generosity and prudence. "The only use of money is not to have to think about it," was one of his axioms. Eminently liberal in his repayment of all service rendered to him, giving whenever he could give

Digitized by Google

with a child-like pleasure at the moment, and then an absolute forgetfulness,—personal economy was I believe not distasteful to him. "Plain living and high thinking" would have been his *choice*, as it was his destiny. In his playfulness he would tell me that *when* we came into our fortune (an imaginary £3000 a year that we used to argue about the disposal of), I should see how reformed a character he would become in the matter of dress; but I feel sure the old coat, old hat, old slippers, would have been equally clung to, and that our life could not have been rendered more completely satisfying by any increase of means.

On the 5th of March, the eleventh anniversary of our marriage, we walked together on the West Pier—walked briskly to and fro in the breeze and sunshine, and in sheltered corners stood to watch the waves. That evening there came to Brighton General and Mrs. Cotton, two of the friends in whom he most thoroughly delighted. General Cotton's conversation he always spoke of as one of the greatest enjoyments procurable, and *her* brightness and charm now seemed peculiarly to refresh him. *They* could not persuade themselves that the case was hopeless, so animated was his greeting, and by candlelight the sallow hue of his skin, and even the emaciation, was not startling. But each day now brought some slight diminution of bodily strength. On the 13th, while preparing for his morning's drive, he said: "I am weaker than ever. It is vain to kick against the pricks." And then, with most pathetic playfulness, and calling himself by one of the myriad pet names I used in our happier days to invent for him, he declared he could be quite sorry for him-

Digitized by Google

self, could pity himself. I could not help saying, "*And me!*" And oh the unutterable compassion of his voice, the deep tenderness that rung out in his reply, "*Infinitely! infinitely!*" Then in a few moments he very solemnly and earnestly went on, "There is a power stronger than all our wishes and regrets; we must not let any angry or impatient feelings creep into our hearts, we must quietly and patiently yield."

On the same day we took our last walk; sat out, and looked at sea and sky together for the last time. On Friday we moved to the house of his kind sister-in-law on the other side of the square. Painting was going on at the back of our comfortable lodgings, and Dr. Hilbers spoke of that as quite sufficient, in his weak state, to induce the symptom that now alarmed us, and reduced his strength still further. His sister-in-law was not at home, but his niece Violetta had already most lovingly implored him to be her guest, and now renewed her entreaties.

When once the change was accomplished it was very affecting to notice his enjoyment of it. Sometimes, during the last few weeks, he had expressed his longing for a home, and now one, familiar to him for twenty years, and having only pleasant associations, was eagerly thrown open to him. All its comfortable arrangements gave him pleasure. In the cheerful bedroom we occupied, pictures of his kindred hung upon the walls; and thinking of the peculiarly tender love between him and his mother, one is glad that the last chair he ever sat in should have been his mother's armchair. He seemed better that first evening at No. 1, and when General and Mrs. Cotton came as usual to

Digitized by Google

spend it with him, told them he "felt himself in paradise since his move." Yet in the night, while I lay silently there hoping he was asleep, he suddenly said, "Your love supports me," and something in the almost solemn tone of the voice struck terror to my heart. The next day he had his breakfast in bed for the first time. But he enjoyed his drive, talked with animation to his companion, and insisted upon walking down to the dining-room for dinner. This too he did on the Sunday; but for the last time. For now the bodily strength ebbed rapidly. The last drive was on Tuesday the 19th, when he noticed with pleasure some beautiful streaks of light in the afternoon sky. It was a cold day, and spite of all precautions he returned chilled, and that evening he had a shivering-fit. Till now these attacks had invariably come on in the night, and no one but myself had ever witnessed them. Oh what agony, for months past, witnessing them! for I knew the fever and weakness that invariably succeeded them. Yet they never seemed to depress him. He would be actually *playful* during their continuance—always solicitous to soothe my alarm, to assure me the attack was passing off, would soon pass off, was less severe than the last.

I do not here enumerate the remedies tried. It is enough to say that *nothing* had the least effect in checking those paroxysms of trembling and breathlessness with sense of internal chill. Pain there was none. He would entreat me not to move, to fold him closely in my arms; and so, with perfect cheeriness and hopefulness, thinking more of my alarm than any danger to himself, he bore one fever-fit after another till they had

Digitized by Google

wasted him to a shadow. On Wednesday evening he looked sad as the familiar shudder came on at a new hour. "This dashes our hopes," he said. Yet he took the greatest pleasure that very evening in Mrs. Cotton's music. Music had been one of the passions of his earlier days. Of late he had got weaned from it, having a wife who did not play; and, indeed, even when the opportunity arose of gratifying the dormant taste, he had seemed almost reluctant to do so. But now that he was getting too weak for much sustained conversation, the "refreshment" of the sweet, slow, flowing music—the only kind he wished for—was keenly felt; and this enjoyment he had for several evenings. It now became my privilege to wait upon him daily more and more. Little by little the singularly independent and self-helpful man came to permit his wife to do everything for him. But so perfect the sweetness of his nature, and so exquisite its courtesy, he never showed the least annoyance at this necessity: he even made it a pleasure. The washing and dressing—all got over in bed now—were got over in the cheerfullest way possible, with the gracefullest acknowledgment of every attempt to serve.[1] It was still impossible not to feel happy in his presence, and I knew I had the rest of my life for sorrow. Yet when I look back to myself at that time, I almost shudder to think that I *could* be cheerful! But he had more than once said to me that my cheerfulness was his greatest

[1] On one of these mornings some sudden impulse made me say:—"William, such love as mine for you cannot be the result of mere mechanical or vital forces, can it?" And he replied, in a tone of conviction from which in my darkest hours I gain some support, "*Oh no!* It has a far higher source."

Digitized by Google

boon and delight; and for weeks I had had one wish only,—to smooth the path for him. I never spoke to him but with smiles, with almost gaiety, to which he invariably responded. His sensitive nature was peculiarly susceptible to gloomy looks, and besides, he had not given up all hope of recovery. On this point he seemed to have, so to speak, a double consciousness. His knowledge of physiology must have told him of imminent danger; and, indeed, many expressions of his showed that he understood his own case perfectly. Yet at other times there was the hopefulness that characterizes consumption. On the 20th he told me that he had a conviction that "when we got to the country he should recover;" twice told me this during that last fortnight. I am thankful for every word that he uttered in this strain, for it seems to prove that he did not suffer. On Friday our dear friends General and Mrs. Cotton left, and he missed and regretted them. But he continued to see friends to the last. Indeed, his nature seemed to grow more and more genial and gracious, more demonstrative of affection. The smile of welcome was warmer and as bright as ever. The dear nieces never had so many sweet and loving words to garner up in their hearts as during this last winter. For me he had a boundless tenderness and pity. I have memories of love and blessing too sacred to my sorrow to be recorded here. I had thought I might give more of his gracious sayings. But I could not give the look, the tone; it is best, as he once wrote of words of mine, to let them "just sink into the silence of one's heart." Yet those who value him as he deserved will be glad to know that even his exceeding humility did

Digitized by Google

not prevent his realizing that he was, and had long been, the object of an exceptional affection. On one of our last days he said to me, "Yours is a *great* love. I do not believe there ever was such another." And another saying of his will prove that however inferior to him, his constant companion was still sufficing. During one of the last nights, fixing the large dark eyes—always beautiful, but never so beautiful as now—very earnestly on mine, he said, "I think you and I should make a happy world if we were the only two in it."

On the morning of Tuesday the 26th Mr. Carpenter saw him. They talked politics, discussed the Budget, and my husband's mind was clear and keen as ever. Mr. Carpenter did not think he was bidding him good-bye for the last time, though he blessed him, rejoicing, as he said, to see "so bright a face."

Even on Wednesday William rose at the usual hour, walked resolutely down-stairs, finished the third number of 'Middlemarch,' which he had read during the last few days with steady determination, listened to a "beautifully written" and very kind note from the author, saw his dear niece Clara and both doctors—for now Dr. Allen came as an invaluable friend, and for the last two evenings helped to carry him up-stairs. Wednesday night was one of very high fever and of some delirium. I was alone with him (always alone at night), and even though distressed by vague dream-like fancies that we were in an enemy's country, and amenable to some punishment there, the "sweet reasonableness" of his nature prevailed even then, and he showed me how we must make the best of our situation. And he was

Digitized by Google

easily recalled, and always knew me. But the high fever had done its work. The following morning, Thursday the 28th, he told me he did not mean to attempt to rise. I cannot retrace the hours of this last day. It seemed as though he who hitherto had retained some enjoyment and hope of life, now all at once knew that he was to die, and equally acquiesced in it! His perfect calm, his habitual manner, were not for one moment disturbed. It was of others he still thought throughout. He alluded to the "melancholy of it" for "poor Rebecca" (his sister-in-law) in the half-playful manner he might have had on any other day. Throughout these hours of the last weariness he used some of *our words* for different things,—for we had a language of our own, as I said before. But for me he had tones of tender pity. For me he "grieved *deeply, deeply.* He could have wished to live for my sake more than for his own." And then in some connexion that has escaped me, though I strain my memory often to recall it, but I think in answer to some cry of anguish, and with a wish to give me still something to live for, with a thrilling earnestness of voice and far-off gaze I shall surely remember till I die: "And if there be a further sphere for us, it must be our part to prepare ourselves for it." For Violetta, his "sweetest of hostesses," as he called her, he had the most gracious solicitude. "Was *she* quite well? were we eating enough?" The mind was unclouded throughout. He listened to letters, talked of dictating a reply to one. The voice grew indistinct and the sentences broken; but I do not believe there was the least confusion of mind. I add a few sentences

Digitized by Google

jotted down while the blow still *stunned*, and the agony was still felt :—"Throughout the day he kept telling me he 'was doing well,' 'was doing very well,' and once I heard the words, 'Quite normal,' as though he were watching himself die. Once I saw the hands clasped as in a speechless communion with the Unseen, and twice I caught the solemn word *God*, uttered not in a tone of appeal or entreaty, but as if the supreme contemplation which had been his very life meant more, revealed more than ever. When I said to him, 'Oh what a grace of patience God has given you!' he shook his head in gentle deprecation. . . .

"Dear Vi was of course necessarily called out of the room to provide for his wants, and thus I had the privilege of never leaving him. God bless her for it. . . . When my angel hardly seemed conscious, when the eyes were half-closed and the open lips were parched and pale (he was averse to having them moistened, and had said 'Let me rest'), I dared to lay mine on them and say, 'Your miserable wife!' I did not hope for the response that came—three little kisses, and the whispered word 'Blessing.' Some time in the day, when I implored him to give me that blessing, he had said in his sweet natural way, 'I only wish it was better worth.' But he gave it then. It was not *far* from the end when opening his eyes and seeing Vi and me beside him, he had quite in a cheerful tone said, 'There they are, the two dear creatures.' Later—as I bent over him—he opened his eyes, and with *the same smile as in health and happiness*, bright, inexpressibly tender, he took my face into his hand—twice did so. This old familiar caress was the farewell.

Digitized by Google

"After his last spoonful of turtle, which Vi gave while I raised him, the *peculiar sound* in the throat came on, but it had no horror, no intensity about it, and did not to either of us convey the fact that he was about to go. After that the laboured breathing changed its character. Violetta was called away. I was quite alone with my love. I got on the bed behind him, the better to prop him in what seemed an easy sleep—the hands and feet still warm. His head passed gradually from the pillow to my breast, and there the cherished head rested *firmly;* the breathing grew gentler and gentler. Never shall I forget the *great awe,* the brooding presence with which the room was filled. My heart leapt wildly with a new sensation, but it was not *fear.* Only it would have seemed profane to utter even my illimitable love, or to call upon his name. This must have lasted, Vi thinks, not more than ten minutes. the head grew damp and very heavy; my arms were under him. Then the sleep grew quite quiet, and as the church-clock began to strike ten I caught a little, *little* sigh, such as a new-born infant might give in waking—not a tremor, not a thrill of the frame; and then Vi came back with Clara's nurse (who having a peculiar love and admiration for him I had said might come up). I told them he was gone, and I *thanked God* for the perfect peace in which he passed away. . . ."

He was buried in the Brighton Cemetery, in a spot at present still secluded, and over which the larks sing joyously. There a plain grey granite headstone rises "to his pure and cherished memory," with just his name and two dates, and this one line, long associated

Digitized by Google

with him in my mind, and which all who knew him have felt to be appropriate—

"His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart."

Only four went to his funeral, viz., Clara's husband, General Cotton, and Mr. Carpenter (whom he had taken pleasure in introducing to each other as "two of the noblest men he knew"), Dr. Allen, his kind friend of years. There were no mourning trappings—peculiarly discordant with the idea of *him*—only the carriage with "the dear grey horses" followed, and in it hearts that valued him. A clergyman who had known him, not long but well, in our Borrowdale home, asked whether he might come and read the Service. This will show the feelings my husband inspired in those whose *thoughts* were not his. Indeed, I never knew a *high moral nature* that did not at once recognise the purity, righteousness, and holiness of his. In the case of all such the sense of differing opinions melted away under the influence of his character. To men of negative views, the *possibility* of a future life seemed to acquire a deeper interest now that he had passed away; to those whose faith in immortality was firmest, the conception of spiritual enjoyment became all the clearer for having known one so spiritually-minded, so purely searching after the truth. I might multiply testimonies to this effect, but they are not needed here. If, however, the appreciation of the cultivated and thoughtful seem a mere matter of course, it was yet not more marked or more unfailing than the love he, shy and silent towards them, won from all the simple and uneducated who were brought into frequent contact with him. Something in his courtesy elevated them, something in his brightness cheered. I do not

Digitized by Google

think any person who ever spoke to him half-a-dozen times was quite indifferent to him. No man sought love less, or was less careful about the impression he made on others. But love unsought came largely to him, and during his last illness I think he discovered with something of sweet and tender surprise how *very* dear he was to many! It was, I dare to believe, a gentle, a cheerful last illness! Of him every memory is sweet and elevating; and I record it here, that a life-long anguish such as defies words, is yet not too high a price to pay for the privilege of having loved him and belonged to him.

This was written a year and a half ago, and I have nothing to add. I might indeed cite the testimony of relations and friends to some ineffable charm in his nature, ineffable tenderness in their regret. But I prefer closing this brief memoir with words of his—and the passage I am about to quote contains, I believe, the very secret of his pure life and the ground of his serenity in death:—

"There comes a time when neither Fear nor Hope are necessary to the pious man; but he loves righteousness for righteousness' sake, and love is all in all. It is not joy at escape from future perdition that he now feels; nor is it hope for some untold happiness in the future: it is a present rapture of piety, and resignation, and love; a present that fills eternity. It asks nothing, it fears nothing; it loves and it has no petition to make. God takes back His little child unto Himself—a little child that has no fear, and is all trust."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF WILLIAM SMITH TO "BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE."

1839.	August, . .	A Prosing upon Poetry.
	October, . .	On the Feigned Madness of Hamlet.
1840.	January, . .	Hints on History, Part 1.
	February, .	Do. do. Part 2.
	June, ...	Wild Oats—A New Species.
	September, .	The Boundary Question.
	December, .	On Population (a Review of Alison).
1841.	March, . . .	Wordsworth.
1842.	May, ...	Gabrielle de Belle Isle.
	June, ...	Angelo.
	September, .	Dennis on Shakespeare.
	,,	History of France (Review of Michelet) Part 1.
	October, . .	Do. do. Part 2.
1843.	March, . . .	Comte.
	May, ...	Dumas on Italy.
	,,	Leap Year: A Tale.
	July, ...	Past and Present, by Carlyle.
	October, . .	Mill's Logic.
1844.	June, ...	The Diligence: A Leaf from a Journal.
	August, . .	Some Remarks on Schiller's Maid of Orleans.
	,,	M. Girardin.
	September, .	M. Louis Blanc.
	November, .	French Socialists.

Digitized by Google

1845. February, . The Superfluities of Life.
April, . . . Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation.
June, ... The Novel and the Drama.
July, ... Torquato Tasso (Goethe's).
August, . . On Punishment.
September, . Warren's Law Studies.
October, . . Manner and Matter: A Tale.
November, . Hakem the Slave: A Tale.
December, . The Mountain and the Cloud.
1846. December, . Mildred: A Tale. Part 1.
1847. January, . . Do. do. Part 2.
February, . Do. do. Part 3.
April, . . . Cromwell.
May, ... The Visible and Tangible: A Metaphysical Fragment.
July, ... Sir H. Nicolas's History of the Navy.
August, . . Grote's History of Greece.
September, . Le Premier Pas.
,, Byways of History.
,, Giacomo da Valencia; or, the Student of Bologna.
October, . . Works of Hans Christian Andersen.
November, . The American Library.
December, . Emerson.
1848. June, ... Guesses at Truth.
October, . . J. S. Mill's Political Economy.
December, . Mrs. Hemans.
1849. March, . . . M. Prudhon, Contradictions Economiques.
April, . . . Tennyson's Poems.
May, ... Colonization; Mr. Wakefield's Theory.
August, . . Charles Lamb.
October, . . Physical Geography (Mrs. Somerville).
1850. January, . . Howard.
February, . Goldsmith. Part 1.
March, . . . Do. Part 2.
,, A Late Case of Court-Martial.
April, . . . Festus.
September, . The Night Side of Nature.

Digitized by Google

1851. March, . . . Southey. Part 1.
April, . . . Do. Part 2.
May, ... Some American Poets.
August, . . Voltaire in the Crystal Palace.
September, . Mr. Ruskin's Works.
October, . . The Essays of Mr. Helps.
November, . The Dramas of Henry Taylor.
1852. March, . . . Miss Mitford's Recollections.
May, ... Life of Niebuhr.
September, . Jeffrey. Part 1.
October, . . Do. Part 2.
" Corneille and Shakespeare.
" Review of Sortain's Count Arenberg.
" Dr. Chalmers as Political Economist.
1854. January, . . Landor's Last Fruit off an Old Tree.
February, . Gray's Letters.
March, . . . The Epidemics of the Middle Ages.
" Jerome Cardan.
1855. March, . . . Life of Lord Metcalfe.
April, . . . Sir Benjamin Brodie's Psychological Inquiries.
August, . . Warren's Blackstone.
1856. March, . . . Liddell's History of Rome.
April, . . . Prescott's Philip the Second.
1858. January, . . Debit and Credit.
March, . . . Sullivan on Cumberland.
August, . . Gladstone's Homer.
" White's Eighteen Christian Centuries.
November, . Buckle's History of Civilisation.
1859. July, ... Dr. Mansel's Bampton Lectures.
August, . . Leaders of the Reformation.
October, . . Sir William Hamilton.
November, . Vaughan's Revolutions in English History, vol. i.
December, . Motley's Dutch Republic.
1860. August, . . Dr. Hanna's Wycliffe and the Huguenots.
October, . . Charles Hemans on Papal Government.
1861. February, . Carthage and its Remains.

Digitized by Google

1861.	May, ...	Motley's History of the Netherlands.
	June, ...	Miss Bremer in Switzerland and Italy.
	August, . .	Vaughan's Revolutions in English History, vol. ii.
	November, .	M. Ernest Renan.
1862.	May, ...	Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.
1863.	January, . .	T. Trollope's Italian Novels.
	April, . . .	Spedding's Life of Bacon.
	May, ...	Wilson's Prehistoric Man.
	September, .	Jean Paul Richter.
	October, . .	Sheridan Knowles.
	December, .	Tyndall on Heat.
1864.	February, .	Kirk's Charles the Bold.
	April, . . .	Mr. Knight's Reminiscences.
	August, . .	Mr. Lewes's Aristotle.
	"	Victor Hugo's Shakespeare.
	October, . .	Max Müller's Lectures on the Science of Language, 2d Series.
1865.	March, . . .	William Blake.
1866.	May, ...	J. S. Mill on Sir William Hamilton.
	"	Scraps of Verse from a Tourist's Journal.
	June, ...	Life of Steele.
1867.	February, .	Dallas's Gay Science.
	March, . . .	Ferrier.
	April, ...	Hemans's Ancient Christianity.
	June, ...	The Duke of Argyll's Reign of Law.
	September, .	La Physique Moderne (Saigey).
1868.	July, ...	Motley's History of the Netherlands.
	November, .	Lewes's History of Philosophy.
	December, .	Dean Milman.
1870.	July, ...	Lecky's History of Morals.
	November, .	Professor Porter on The Human Intellect.
1871.	July, ...	The Coming Race.

PRINTED BY T. AND A. CONSTABLE, PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY
AT THE EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY PRESS.

Digitized by Google