VARIOUS

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY, VOLUME 04, NO. 21, JULY, 1859

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The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 04, No. 21, July, 1859

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THOMAS PAINE'S

SECOND APPEARANCE IN THE UNITED STATES

"Nay, so far did he carry his obstinacy, that he absolutely invited a professed Anti-Diluvian from the Gallic Empire, who illuminated the whole country with his principles and his nose."—Salmagundi.

We lukewarm moderns can hardly conceive the degree of violence and bitterness reached by party-feeling in the early years of the United States Constitution. A Mississippi member of Congress listening to a Freesoil speech is mild in demeanor and expression, if we compare his ill-nature with the spiteful fury of

his predecessors in legislation sixty years ago. The same temper was visible throughout the land. Nobody stood aloof. Two hostile camps were pitched over against each other, and every man in Israel was to be found in his tent. Our great experiment was a new one; on its success depended the personal welfare of every citizen, and naturally every citizen was anxious to train up that experiment in the way which promised to his reason or to his feelings the best result.

The original Federalists of 1787 were in favor of effacing as much as possible the boundary-lines of the Thirteen Colonies, and of consolidating them into a new, united, and powerful people, under a strong central government. The first Anti-Federalists were made up of several sects: one branch, sincere republicans, were fearful that the independence of the States was in danger, and that consolidation would prepare the way for monarchy; another, small, but influential, still entertained the wish for reunion with England, or, at least, for the adoption of the English form of government,—and, hoping that the dissensions of the old Confederation might lead to some such result, drank the health of the Bishop of Osnaburg in good Madeira, and objected to any system which might place matters upon a permanent republican basis; and a third party, more numerous and noisy than either, who knew by long experience that the secret of home popularity was to inspire jealousy of the power of Congress, were unwilling to risk the loss of personal consequence in this new scheme of centralization,

and took good care not to allow the old local prejudices and antipathies to slumber. The two latter classes of patriots are well described by Franklin in his "Comparison of the Ancient Jews with the Modern Anti-Federalists,"—a humorous allegory, which may have suggested to the Senator from Ohio his excellent conceit of the Israelite with Egyptian principles. "Many," wrote Franklin, "still retained an affection for Egypt, the land of their nativity, and whenever they felt any inconvenience or hardship, though the natural and unavoidable effect of their change of situation, exclaimed against their leaders as the authors of their trouble, and were not only for returning into Egypt, but for stoning their deliverers…. Many of the chiefs thought the new Constitution might be injurious to their particular interests,—that the profitable places would be engrossed by the families and friends of Moses and Aaron, and others, equally well born, excluded."

Time has decided this first point in favor of the Unionists. None of the evils prophesied by their opponents have as yet appeared. The independence of the individual States remains inviolate, and, although the central executive has grown yearly more powerful, a monarchy seems as remote as ever. Local distinctions are now little prized in comparison with federal rank. It is not every man who can recollect the name of the governor of his own State; very few can tell that of the chief of the neighboring Commonwealth. The old boundaries have grown more and more indistinct; and when we look at the present map

of the Union, we see only that broad black line known as Mason and Dixon's, on one side of which are neatness, thrift, enterprise, and education,—and on the other, whatever the natives of that region may please to call it.

After 1789, the old Egypt faction ceased to exist, except as grumblers; but the States-Rights men, though obliged to acquiesce in the Constitution, endeavored, by every means of "construction" their ingenuity could furnish, to weaken and restrict the exercise and the range of its power. The Federalists, on the other hand, held that want of strength was the principal defect of the system, and were for adding new buttresses to the Constitutional edifice. It is curious to remark that neither party believed in the permanency of the Union. Then came into use the mighty adjectives "constitutional" and "unconstitutional,"—words of vast import, doing equally good service to both parties in furnishing a word to express their opinion of the measures they urged and of those they objected to. And then began to be strained and frayed that much-abused piece of parchment which Thomas Paine called the political Bible of the American people, and foolishly thought indispensable to liberty in a representative government. "Ask an American if a certain act be constitutional," says Paine, "he pulls out his pocket volume, turns to page and verse, and gives you a correct answer in a moment." Poor Mr. Paine! if you had lived fifty years longer, you would have seen that paper constitutions, like the paper money you despised so justly, depend upon honesty and confidence for their

value, and are at a sad discount in hard times of fraud and corruption. Unprincipled men find means of evading the written agreement upon their face by ingenious subterfuges or downright repudiation. An arbitrary majority will construe the partnership articles to suit their own interests, and *stat pro constitutione voluntas*. It is true that the *litera scripta* remains, but the meaning is found to vary with the interpreter.

In 1791, when the two parties were fairly formed and openly pitted against each other, a new element of discord had entered into politics, which added the bitterness of class-feeling to the usual animosity of contention. Society in the Middle and Southern States had been composed of a few wealthy and influential families, and of a much more numerous lower class who followed the lead of the great men. These lesser citizens had now determined to set up for themselves, and had enlisted in the ranks of the Anti-Federalists, who soon assumed the name and style of Democrats, an epithet first bestowed upon them in derision, but joyfully adopted,—one of the happiest hits in political nomenclature ever made. *In hoc verbo vinces:* In that word lay victory. If any one be tempted, in this age, to repeat the stupid question, "What's in a name?" let him be answered,—Everything: place, power, pelf, perhaps we may add peculation. "The Barons of Virginia," chiefs of State-Rights, who at home had been in favor of a governor and a senate for life, and had little to fear from any lower class in their own neighborhood, saw how much was to be gained by "taking the people into

partnership," as Herodotus phrases it, and commenced that alliance with the proletaries of the North which has proved so profitable to Southern leaders. In New England, the land of industry, self-control, and superior cultivation, (for the American Parnassus was then in Connecticut, either in Hartford, or on Litchfield Hill,) there was, comparatively speaking, no lower class. The Eastern men, whose levelling spirit and equality of ranks had been so much disliked and dreaded by the representatives from other Colonies in the Ante-Revolutionary Congresses, had undergone little or no social change by the war, and probably had at that period a more correct idea of civil liberty and free government than any other people on the face of the earth. General Charles Lee wrote to an English friend, that the New-Englanders were the only Americans who really understood the meaning of republicanism, and many years later De Tocqueville came to nearly the same opinion:—*"C'est dans la Nouvelle Angleterre que se sont combinées les deux ou trois idées principales, qui aujourd'hui forment les bases de la théorie sociale des États-Unis."* In this region Federalism reigned supreme. The New-Englanders desired a strong, honest, and intelligent government; they thought, with John Adams, that "true equality is to do as you would be done by," and agreed with Hamilton, that "a government in which every man may aspire to any office was free enough for all purposes"; and judging from what they saw at home, they looked upon Anti-Federalism not only as erroneous in theory, but as disreputable in practice. "The

name of Democrat," writes a fierce old gentleman to his son, "is despised; it is synonymous with infamy." Out of New England a greater social change was going forward. Already appeared that impatience of all restraint which is so alarming a symptom of our times. Every rogue, "who felt the halter draw," wanted to know if it was for tyranny like this that the Colonies had rebelled. "Such a monster of a government has seldom or never been known on earth. A blessed Revolution, a blessed Revolution, indeed!—*but farmers, mechanics, and laborers had no share in it.* We are the asses who pay." This was the burden of the Democratic song.

But the real issue between the two parties, which underlay all their proposed measures and professed principles, was the old struggle of classes, modified of course by the time and the place. The Democrats contended for perfect equality, political and social, and as little power as possible in the central government so long as their party was not in command. The Federalists, who held the reins, were for a strong conservative administration, and a wholesome distinction of classes. The two parties were not long in waiting for flags to rally around, and fresh fields on which to fight. The French Revolution furnished both. In its early stages it had excited a general sympathy in America; and, indeed, so has every foreign insurrection, rebellion, or riot since, no matter where or why it occurred, provided good use has been made of the sacred words Revolution and Liberty. This cry has never been echoed in this country without exciting a large body of men to mass-meetings, dinners, and other public

demonstrations, who do not stop to consider what it means, or whether, in the immediate instance, it has any meaning at all. John Adams said in his "Defence of American Constitutions," "Our countrymen will never run delirious after a word or a name." Mr. Adams was much mistaken. If, according to the Latin proverb, a word is sufficient for a wise man, so, in another sense, it is all that is needful for fools. But as the Revolution advanced in France towards republicanism, the Federalists, who thought the English system, less the king and the hereditary lords, the best scheme of government, began to grow lukewarm. When it became evident that the New Era was to end in bloodshed, instead of universal peace and good-will towards men,—that the Rights of Man included murder, confiscation, and atheism, —that the Sovereignty of the People meant the rule of King Mob, who seemed determined to carry out to the letter Diderot's famous couplet,—

> "Et des boyaux du dernier prêtre
> Serrez le cou du dernier des rois,"—

then the adjective *French* became in Federal mouths an epithet of abhorrence and abuse; up went the flag of dear Old England, the defender of the faith and of social order. The opposition party, on the contrary, saw in the success of the French people, in their overthrow of kings and nobles, a cheerful encouragement to their own struggle against the aristocratic Federalists, and

would allow no sanguinary irregularities to divert their sympathy from the great Democratic triumph abroad. The gay folds of the tricolor which floated over them seemed to shed upon their heads a mild influence of that Gallic madness that led them into absurdities we could not now believe, were they not on record. The fashions, sartorial and social, of the French were affected; amiable Yankees called each other *citizen*, invented the feminine *citess*, and proposed changing our old calendar for the Ventose and Fructidor arrangement of the one and indivisible republic. (We wish they had adopted their admirable system of weights and measures.) Divines are said to have offered up thanks to the Supreme Being for the success of the good *Sans-culottes*. At all events, their victories were celebrated by civic festivals and the discharge of cannon; the English flag was burned as a sacrifice to the Goddess of Liberty; a French frigate took a prize off the Capes of the Delaware, and sent her in to Philadelphia; thousands of the populace crowded the wharves, and, when the British colors were seen reversed, and the French flying over them, burst into exulting hurras. When a report came that the Duke of York was a prisoner and shown in a cage in Paris, all the bells of Philadelphia rang peals of joy for the downfall of tyrants. Here is the story of a civic *fête* given at Reading, in Massachusetts, which we extract from a newspaper of the time as a specimen of the Gallo-Yankee absurdities perpetrated by our grandfathers:—

"The day was ushered in by the ringing of the bells, and a

salute of fifteen discharges from a field-piece. The American flag waved in the wind, and the flag of France over the British in inverted order. At noon a large number of respectable citizens assembled at Citizen Raynor's, and partook of an elegant entertainment. After dinner, Captain Emerson's military company in uniform assembled and escorted the citizens to the meeting-house, where an address pertinent to the occasion was delivered by the Rev. Citizen Prentiss, and united prayers and praises were offered to God, and several hymns and anthems were well sung; after which they returned in procession to Citizen Raynor's, where three farmers, with their frocks and utensils, and with a tree on their shoulders, were escorted by the military company formed in a hollow square to the Common, where the tree was planted in form, as an emblem of freedom, and the Marseillaise Hymn was sung by a choir within a circle round the tree. Major Boardman, by request, superintended the business of the day, and directed the manoeuvres."

In the Gallic jargon then fashionable, England was "an insular Bastille of slaves," and New England "the Vendée of America." On the other side, the Federalists returned cheer for cheer,—looked with true British contempt on the warlike struggles of the restless Frenchman,—chuckled over the disasters which befell "his little popgun fleets,"—and damned the Democrats for a pack of poor, dirty, blasphemous cutthroats. Hate one another was the order of the day. The religious element, which always exasperates dissension, was present. French Democrats had set

up the Goddess of Reason (in private life Mme. Momoro) as an object of worship; American Democrats were accused of making Tom Paine's "Age of Reason" their Bible; "Atheist" and "Infidel" were added to the epithets which the Federalists discharged at their foes. So fierce and so general was the quarrel on this European ground, that a distinguished foreigner, then travelling in this country, said that he saw many French and English, but scarcely ever met with an American. Weld, a more humble tourist, put into his book, that in Norfolk, Virginia, he found half the town ready to fight the other half on the French question. Meanwhile, both French and English treated us with ill-disguised contempt, and inflicted open outrages upon our commerce. But it made little difference. One faction was willing to be kicked by England; and the other took a pleasure in being *soufflet*é by France. The rival flags were kept flying until the close of the war of 1812.

An outbreak of Democratic fury bordering upon treason took place, when Senator Mason of Virginia violated the oath of secrecy, and sent a copy of Jay's treaty with England to the "Aurora." Meetings passed condemnatory resolutions expressed in no mild language. Jay was "a slave, a traitor, a coward, who had bartered his country's liberties for British gold." Mobs burned Jay in effigy, and pelted Alexander Hamilton. At a public meeting in Philadelphia, Mr. Blair threw the treaty to the crowd, and advised them to kick it to hell. They carried it on a pole in procession, and burned it before the English minister's house.

A Democratic society in Richmond, Virginia, full of the true modern South Carolina "sound and fury," gave public notice, that, if the treaty entered into by "that damned arch traitor, John Jay, with the British tyrant should be ratified, a petition will be presented to the next General Assembly of Virginia praying that the said State may recede from the Union, and be left under the government and protection of one hundred thousand free and independent Virginians!" A meeting at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, resolved, "that it was weary of the tardiness of Congress in not going to war with England, and that they were *almost ready* to wish for a state of revolution and the guillotine of France for a short space, in order to punish the miscreants who enervate and disgrace the government." Mr. Jefferson's opinion of the treaty is well known from his rhetorical letter to Rutledge, which, in two or three lines, contains the adjectives, *unnecessary, impolitic, dangerous, dishonorable, disadvantageous, humiliating, disgraceful, improper, monarchical, impeachable*. The Mazzei letter, written not long after the ratification, displays the same bitter feeling.

The Federalists had a powerful ally in William Cobbett, who signed himself Peter Porcupine, adopting for his literary *alias* a nickname bestowed by his enemies. This remarkable writer, who, like Paine, figured in the political conflicts of two nations, must have come into the world bristling with pugnacity. A more thorough game-cock never crowed in the pit. He had been a private in the English army, came to the United States

about 1790, and taught French to Americans, and English to Frenchmen, (to Talleyrand among others,) until 1794, when the dogmatic Dr. Priestley arrived here, fresh from the scene of his persecutions. The Doctor losing no time in laying his case before the American public, Cobbett answered his publication, ridiculing it and the Doctor's political career in a pamphlet which became immediately popular with the Federalists. From that time until his departure for England, in 1800, Cobbett's pen was never idle. His "Little Plain English in Favor of Mr. Jay's Treaty" was altogether the best thing published on that side of the question. Cobbett had more than one point of resemblance to Paine, the object of his early invective, but later of his unqualified admiration. These two men were the best English pamphleteers of their day. In shrewdness, in practical sense, Cobbett was fully Paine's equal. He was as coarse and as pithy in expression, but with more wit, a better education, more complete command of language, and a greater variety of resources. Cobbett was a quicker and a harder hitter than Paine. His personal courage gave him a great advantage in his warfaring life. In 1796, in the hottest of the French and English fight, the well-known Porcupine opened a shop in Philadelphia. He filled his show-window with all the prints of English kings, nobles, and generals he could collect, and "then," he says, "I took down the shutters, and waited."

Party-feeling reached the boiling-point when Washington retired to Mount Vernon. Mr. Adams, his successor, had none

of that divinity which hedged the Father of his Country to protect him. Under the former administration, he had been, as Senator Grayson humorously called him, "his superfluous Excellency," and out of the direct line of fire. He could easily look down upon such melancholy squibs as Freneau's "Daddy Vice" and "Duke of Braintree." But when raised above every other head by his high office, he became a mark for the most bitter personal attacks. Mr. Adams unfortunately thought too much about himself to be the successful chief of a party. He allowed his warm feelings to divert him from the main object and end of his followers. He was jealous of Hamilton,—unwilling, in fact, to seem to be governed by the opinion of any man, and half inclined to look for a reëlection outside of his own party. Hamilton, the soul of the Federalists, mistrusted and disliked Mr. Adams, and made the sad mistake of publishing his mistrust and dislike. It must be confessed that the gentlemen who directed the Administration party were no match as tacticians for such file-leaders as Jefferson and Burr. Many of their pet measures were ill-judged, to say the least. The provisional army furnished a fertile theme for fierce declamation. The black cockade became the badge of the supporters of government, so that in the streets one could tell at a glance whether friend or foe was approaching. The Alien and Sedition Laws caused much bitter feeling and did great damage to the Federalists. To read these acts and the trials under them now excites somewhat of the feeling with which we look upon some strange and clumsy engine of torture in a

mediaeval museum. How the temper of this people and their endurance of legal inflictions have changed since then! There was Matthew Lyon, a noted Democrat of Irish origin, who had published a letter charging the President with "ridiculous pomp, idle parade, and selfish avarice." He was found guilty of sedition, and sentenced to four months' imprisonment and a fine of one thousand dollars. There was Cooper, an Englishman, who fared equally ill for saying or writing that the President did not possess sufficient capacity to fulfil the duties of his office. What should we think of the sanity of James Buchanan, should he prosecute and obtain a conviction against some Black-Republican Luther Baldwin of 1859, for wishing that the wad of a cannon, fired in his honor, might strike an unmentionable part of his august person? What should we say, if Horace Greeley were to be arrested on a warrant issued by the Supreme Court of New York for a libel on Louis Napoleon, as was William Cobbett by Judge McKean of Pennsylvania for a libel on the King of Spain?

Fiercer and more bitter waxed party-discord, and both sides did ample injustice to one another. Mr. Jefferson wrote, that men who had been intimate all their lives would cross the street and look the other way, lest they should be obliged to touch their hats. And Gouverneur Morris gives us a capital idea of the state of feeling when he says that a looker-on, who took no part in affairs, felt like a sober man at a dinner when the rest of the company were drunk. Civil war was often talked of, and the threat of secession, which has become the rhetorical staple of

the South, produced solely for exportation to the North, to be used there in manufacturing pro-slavery votes out of the timidity of men of large means and little courage or perspicacity, was then freely made by both divisions of the Union. Had we been of French or Spanish descent, there would have been barricades, *coup-d'états, pronunciamentos*; but the English race know better how to treat the body-politic. They never apply the knife except for the most desperate operations. But where hard words were so plenty, blows could not fail. Duels were frequent, cudgellings not uncommon,—although as yet the Senate-Chamber had not been selected as the fittest scene for the use of the bludgeon. It is true that molasses-and-water was the beverage allowed by Congress in those simple times, and that charged to stationery.

What terrible fellows our ancestors were for calling names, —particularly the gentlemen of the press! If they had been natives of the Island of Frozen Sounds, along the shore of which Pantagruel and Panurge coasted, they would have stood up to their chins in scurrilous epithets. The comical sketch of their rhetoric in "Salmagundi" is literally true:—"Every day have these slangwhangers made furious attacks on each other and upon their respective adherents, discharging their heavy artillery, consisting of large sheets loaded with scoundrel, villain, liar, rascal, numskull, nincompoop, dunderhead, wiseacre, blockhead, jackass." As single words were not always explosive enough to make a report equal to their feelings, they had recourse to compounds;—"pert and prating popinjay," "hackneyed

gutscraper," "maggot of corruption," "toad on a dung-heap," "snivelling sophisticating hound," are a few of the chain-shot which strike our eyes in turning over the yellow faded files. They are all quiet now, those eager, snarling editors of fifty years since, and mostly forgotten. Even the ink which records their spiteful abuse is fading away;—

> "Dunne no more the halter dreads,
> The torrent of his lies to check,
> No gallows Cheetham's dreams invades,
> Nor lours o'er Holt's devoted neck."

Emerson's saying, that involuntarily we read history as superior beings, is never so true as when we read history before it has been worked up for the public, in the raw material of letters, pamphlets, and newspapers. Feverish paragraphs, which once excited the enthusiasm of one party and the fiercest opposition of the other, lie before us as dead and as unmeaning as an Egyptian mummy. The passion which once gave them life is gone. The objects which the writers considered all-important we perceive to have been of no real significance even in their day. We read on with a good-natured pity, akin to the feeling which the gods of Epicurus might be supposed to experience when they looked down upon foolish mortals,—and when we shut the book, go out into our own world to fret, fume, and wrangle over things equally transitory and frivolous.

When it became evident that the Administration party ran the

risk of being beaten in the election of 1800, their trumpeters sounded the wildest notes of alarm. "People! how long will you remain blind? Awake! be up and doing! If Mr. Jefferson is elected, the equal representation of the small States in the Senate will be destroyed, the funding system swept away, the navy abolished, all commerce and foreign trade prohibited, and the fruits of the soil left to rot on the hands of the farmer. The taxes will all fall on the landed interest, all the churches will be overturned, none but Frenchmen employed by government, and the monstrous system of liberty and equality, with all its horrid consequences, as experienced in France and St. Domingo, will inevitably be introduced." Thus they shouted, and no doubt many of the shouters sincerely believed it all. Nevertheless, and in spite of these alarums, the Revolution of '99, as Mr. Jefferson liked to call it, took place without bloodshed, and in 1801 that gentleman mounted the throne.

After this struggle was over, the Federalists, some from conviction and some from disgust at being beaten, gave up the country as lost. Worthy New-Englanders, like Cabot, Fisher Ames, and Wolcott, had no longer hope. They sank into the position of mere grumblers, with one leading principle,—admiration of England, and a willingness to submit to any insults which England in her haughtiness might please to inflict. "We are sure," says the "Boston Democrat," "that George III. would find more desperately devoted subjects in New England than in any part of his dominions." The Democrats, of course, clung to

their motto, "Whatever is in France is right," and even accepted the arbitrary measures of Bonaparte at home as a mere change of system, and abroad as forced upon him by British pirates. It is curious to read the high Federalist papers in the first days of their sorrow. In their contradictory fault-finding sulkiness, they give some color of truth to Mr. Jefferson's accusation, that the Federal leaders were seeking to establish a monarchy,—a charge well known to be unfounded, as Washington said at the time. "What is the use of celebrating the Fourth of July?" they asked. "Freedom is a stale, narcotic topic. The Declaration of Independence a useless, if not an odious libel upon a friendly nation connected with us by the silken band of amity." Fenno, in his paper, said the Declaration was "a placard of rebellion, a feeble production, in which the spirit of rebellion prevailed over the love of order." Dennie, in the "Portfolio," anticipating Mr. Choate, called it "an incoherent accumulation of indigestible and impracticable political dogmas, dangerous to the peace of the world, and seditious in its local tendency, and, as a composition, equally at variance with the laws of construction and the laws of regular government." The Federalist opinion of the principles of the Administration party was avowed with equal frankness in their papers. "A democracy is the most absurd constitution, productive of anarchy and mischief, which must always happen when the government of a nation depends upon the caprice of the ignorant, harebrained vulgar. All the miseries of men for a long series of years grew out of that infamous mode of polity,

a democracy; which is to be reckoned to be only the corruption and degeneracy of a republic, and not to be ranked among the legitimate forms of government. If it be not a legitimate government, we owe it no allegiance. He is a blind man who does not see this truth; he is a base man who will not assert it. Democratic power is tyranny, in the principle, the beginning, the progress, and the end. It is on its trial here, and the issue will be civil war, desolation, and anarchy." These and other foolish excerpts were kept before their readers by the "Aurora" and "Boston Chronicle," leading Democratic organs, and served to sweeten their triumph and to seal the fate of the unlucky Federalists.

The difference between the tone of these extracts and that of our present journalists, when they touch upon the abstract principles of government, may indicate to us the firm hold which the Democratic theory has taken of our people. As that conquering party marched onward, the opposition was forced to follow after, and to encamp upon the ground their powerful enemy left behind him. To-day when we see gentlemen who consider themselves Conservatives in the ranks of the Democrats, we may suppose that the tour of the political circle is nearly completed.

A momentary lull had followed the storm of the election, when Mr. Jefferson boldly threw down another "bone for the Federalists to gnaw." He wrote to Thomas Paine, inviting him to America, and offering him a passage home in a national

vessel. "You will, in general, find us," he added, "returned to sentiments worthy of former times; in these it will be your glory to have steadily labored, and with as much effect as any man living. That you may live long, to continue your useful labors and reap the reward in the thankfulness of nations, is my sincere prayer. Accept the assurance of my high esteem and affectionate attachment." Mr. Jefferson went even farther. He openly announced his intention of giving Paine an office, if there were one in his gift suitable for him. Now, although Paine had been absent for many years, he had not been forgotten by the Americans. The echo of the noise he made in England reached our shores; and English echoes were more attentively listened to then even than at present. His "Rights of Man" had been much read in this country. Indeed, it was asserted, and upon pretty good authority, that Jefferson himself, when Secretary of State, had advised and encouraged the publication of an American edition as an antidote to the "Davila" of Mr. Adams. Even the "Age of Reason" had obtained an immense circulation from the great reputation of the author. It reminded the Rev. Mr. Goodrich, and other Orthodox New-Englanders, of Milton's description of Death,—

> "Black it stood as night,
> Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell."

Yet numbers of people, nothing frightened, would buy and

read. "No work," Dr. Francis tells us, "had a demand for readers comparable to that of Paine. The 'Age of Reason,' on its first appearance in New York, was printed as an orthodox book by orthodox publishers,—doubtless deceived," the charitable Doctor adds, "by the vast renown which the author of 'Common Sense' had obtained, and *by the prospects of sale*." Paine's position in the French Convention, his long imprisonment, poverty, slovenly habits, and fondness for drink, were all well known and well talked over. William Cobbett, for one, never lost an opportunity of dressing up Paine as a filthy monster. He wrote his life for the sake of doing it more thoroughly. The following extract, probably much relished at the time, will give some idea of the tone and temper of this performance:—

"How Tom gets a living now, or what brothel he inhabits, I know not, nor does it much signify. He has done all the mischief he can do in this world; and whether his carcass is at last to be suffered to rot on the earth, or to be dried in the air, is of very little consequence. Whenever or wherever he breathes his last, he will excite neither sorrow nor compassion; no friendly hand will close his eyes, not a groan will be uttered, not a tear will be shed. Like Judas, he will be remembered by posterity; men will learn to express all that is base, malignant, treacherous, unnatural, and blasphemous by the single monosyllable of Paine."

Cobbett also wrote an *ante-mortem* epitaph, a fit inscription for the life he had composed. It ends thus:—

"He is crammed in a dungeon and preaches up Reason;
Blasphemes the Almighty, lives in filth like a hog;
Is abandoned in death, and interred like a dog."

This brutal passage does not exaggerate the opinion of Paine's character held by the good people of America. He was an object of horror to them,—a rebel against government and against God,—a type of Jacobinism, a type of Infidelity, and, with what seemed to them, no doubt, a beautiful consistency, a type of all that was abandoned and vile. Thomas Paine, a Massachusetts poet of *ci-devant* celebrity, petitioned the General Court for permission to call himself Robert Treat Paine, on the ground that he had no Christian name. In New England, Christianity and Federalism were looked upon as intimately connected, and Democracy as a wicked thing, born of Tom Paine, Tom Jefferson, and the Father of Lies. In this Trinity of Evil, Thomas Paine stood first.

During the struggle for the Presidency, Mr. Jefferson had been accused, from every Federal stump, of the two unpardonable sins to Yankee minds,—namely, that his notes could be bought for five shillings in the pound, and that he did not believe in Revolution. Since his election, he had been daily reminded of his religious short-comings by keen newspaper attacks. He knew that he strengthened the hands of his enemies by inviting home the Arch-Infidel. We are and were then a religious people, in spite of the declaration in Mr. Adams's Tripolitan treaty that the

government of the United States was "not in any sense founded on the Christian religion," and Paine could find few admirers in any class. Mr. Jefferson, too, was well aware that the old man was broken, that the fire had gone out of him, and that his presence in the United States could be of no use whatever to the party. But he thought that Paine's services in the Revolution had earned for him an asylum, and their old acquaintance made him hasten to offer it. We think that the invitation to Paine was one of the manliest acts of Jefferson's life.

When the matter became public, there arose a long, loud cry of abuse, which rang from Massachusetts Bay to Washington City. Anarchy, confusion, and the downfall of not only church, but state, were declared to be the unavoidable consequences of Paine's return to our shores,—that impious apostate! that Benedict Arnold, once useful, and then a traitor! The "United States Gazette" had ten leaders on the text of Tom Paine and Jefferson, "whose love of liberty was neither more rational, generous, or social, than that of the wolf or the tiger." The "New England Palladium" fairly shrieked:—"What! invite to the United States that lying, drunken, brutal infidel, who rejoices in the opportunity of basking and wallowing in the confusion, devastation, bloodshed, rapine, and murder, in which his soul delights?" Why, even the French called him the English orang-outang! He was exposed with a monkey and a bear in a cage in Paris. In 1792, he was forbidden to haunt the White-Bear Tavern in London. He subsisted for eight years on the charity

of booksellers, who employed him in the morning to correct proofs; in the afternoon he was too drunk. He lodged in a cellar. He helped the *poissardes* to clean fish and open oysters. He lived in misery, filth, and contempt. Not until Livingston went to France did any respectable American call upon him. Livingston's attentions to him not only astonished, but disgusted the First Consul, and gave him a very mean opinion of Livingston's talents. The critical Mr. Dennie caused his "Portfolio" to give forth this solemn strain: "If, during the present season of national abasement, infatuation, folly, and vice, any portent could surprise, sober men would be utterly confounded by an article current in all our newspapers, that the loathsome Thomas Paine, a drunken atheist and the scavenger of faction, is invited to return in a national ship to America by the first magistrate of a free people. A measure so enormously preposterous we cannot yet believe has been adopted, and it would demand firmer nerves than those possessed by Mr. Jefferson to hazard such an insult to the moral sense of the nation. If that rebel rascal should come to preach from his Bible to our populace, it would be time for every honest and insulted man of dignity to flee to some Zoar as from another Sodom, to shake off the very dust of his feet and to abandon America." "He is coming," wrote Noah Webster, ("the mender and murderer of English,") "to publish in America the third part of the 'Age of Reason.'" And the epigrammatists, such as they were, tried their goose-quills on the subject:—

"He passed his forces in review,
Smith, Cheetham, Jones, Duane:
'Dull rascals,—these will never do,'
Quoth he,—'I'll send for Paine.'

"Then from his darling den in France
To tempt the wretch to come,
He made Tom's brain with flattery dance
And took the tax from rum."

The Administration editors held their tongues;—the religious side of the question was too strong for them.

Paine was unable to accept the passage offered him in the frigate, and returned in a merchant-vessel in the autumn of the next year (1802). The excitement had not subsided. Early in October, the "Philadelphia Gazette" announced that "a kind of tumultuous sensation was produced in the city yesterday evening in consequence of the arrival of the ship Benjamin Franklin from Havre. It was believed, for a few moments, that the carcass of Thomas Paine was on board, and several individuals were seen disgracing themselves by an impious joy. It was finally understood that Paine had missed his passage by this vessel and was to sail in a ship to New York. Under the New York news-head we perceive a vessel from Havre reported. Infidels! hail the arrival of your high-priest!"

A few days later, the infidel Tom Paine, otherwise Mr. Paine, arrived safely at Baltimore and proceeded thence to Washington.

The journalists gave tongue at once: "Fire! Age of Reason! Look at his nose! He drank all the brandy in Baltimore in nine days! What a dirty fellow! Invited home by a brother Tom! Let Jefferson and his blasphemous crony dangle from the same gallows." The booksellers, quietly mindful of the opportunity, got out an edition of his works in two volumes.

As soon as he was fairly on shore, Paine took sides with his host, and commenced writing "Letters to the People of the United States." He announced in them that he was a genuine Federalist,—not one of that disguised faction which had arisen in America, and which, losing sight of first principles, had begun to contemplate the people as hereditary property: No wonder that the author of the "Rights of Man" was attacked by this faction: His arrival was to them like the sight of water to canine madness: He served them for a standing dish of abuse: The leaders during the Reign of Terror in France and during the late despotism in America were the same men in character; for how else was it to be accounted for that he was persecuted by both at the same time? In every part of the Union this faction was in the agonies of death, and, in proportion as its fate approached, gnashed its teeth and struggled: He should lose half his greatness when they ceased to lie. Mr. Adams, as the late chief of this faction, met with harsh and derisive treatment in these letters, and did not attempt to conceal his irritation in his own later correspondence.

Paine's few defenders tried to back him with weak paragraphs in the daily papers: His great talents, his generous services,

"in spite of a few indiscreet writings about religion," should make him an object of interest and respect. The "Aurora's" own correspondent sent to his paper a favorable sketch of Paine's appearance, manner, and conversation: He was "proud to find a man whom he had admired free from the contaminations of debauchery and the habits of inebriety which have been so grossly and falsely sent abroad concerning him." But the enemy had ten guns to Paine's one, and served them with all the fierceness of party-hate. A shower of abusive missiles rattled incessantly about his ears. However thick-skinned a man may be, and protected over all by the *oes triplex* of self-sufficiency, he cannot escape being wounded by furious and incessant attacks. Paine felt keenly the neglect of his former friends, who avoided him, when they did not openly cut him. Mr. Jefferson, it is true, asked him to dinners, and invited the British minister to meet him; at least, the indignant Anglo-Federal editors said so. Perhaps he offered him an office. If he did, Paine refused it, preferring "to serve as a disinterested volunteer." Poor old man! his services were no longer of much use to anybody. The current of American events had swept past him, leaving him stranded, a broken fragment of a revolutionary wreck.

When the nine days of wonder had expired in Washington, and the inhabitants had grown tired of staring at Paine and of pelting him with abuse, he betook himself to New York. On his way thither, he met with an adventure which shows the kind of martyrdom suffered by this political and religious heretic. He had

stopped at Bordentown, in New Jersey, to look at a small place he owned there, and to visit an old friend and correspondent, Colonel Kirkbride. When he departed, the Colonel drove him over to Trenton to take the stage-coach. But in Trenton the Federal and Religious party had the upperhand, and when Paine applied at the booking-office for a seat to New York the agent refused to sell him one. Moreover, a crowd collected about his lodgings, who groaned dismally when he drove away with his friend, while a band of musicians, provided for the occasion, played the Rogue's March.

Among the editorial celebrities of 1803, James Cheetham, in New York, was almost as famous as Duane of the "Aurora." Cheetham, like many of his contemporaries, Gray, Carpenter, Callender, and Duane himself, was a British subject. He was a hatter in his native land; but a turn for politics ruined his business and made expatriation convenient. In the United States, he had become the editor of the "American Citizen," and was at that time busily engaged in attacking the Federalists and Burr's "Little Band," for their supposed attempt to elect Mr. Burr in the place of Mr. Jefferson. To Cheetham, accordingly, Paine wrote, requesting him to engage lodgings at Lovett's, afterwards the City Hotel. He sent for Cheetham, on the evening of his arrival. The journalist obeyed the summons immediately. This was the first interview between Paine and the man who was to hang, draw, and quarter his memory in a biography. This libellous performance was written shortly after Paine's death. It was intended as a

peace-offering to the English government. The ex-hatter had made up his mind to return home, and he wished to prove the sincerity of his conversion from radicalism by trampling on the remains of its high-priest. So long as Cheetham remained in good standing with the Democrats, Paine and he were fast friends; but when he became heretical and schismatic on the Embargo question, some three or four years later, and was formally read out of the party, Paine laid the rod across his back with all his remaining strength. He had vigor enough left, it seems, to make the "Citizen" smart, for Cheetham cuts and stabs with a spite which shows that the work was as agreeable to his feelings as useful to his plans. His reminiscences must be read *multis cum granis*.

In New York Paine enjoyed the same kind of second-rate ovation as in Washington. A great number of persons called upon him, but mostly of the laboring class of emigrants, who had heard of the "Rights of Man," and, feeling disposed to claim as many rights as possible in their new country, looked with reverence upon the inventor of the system. The Democratic leaders, with one or two exceptions, avoided Paine. Respectabilities shunned him as a contamination. Grant Thorburn was suspended from church-membership for shaking hands with him. To the boys he was an object of curious attention; his nose was the burden of their songs.

Cheetham carried round a subscription-list for a public dinner. Sixty or seventy of Paine's admirers attended. It went

off brilliantly, and was duly reported in the "American Citizen." Then the effervescence of New York curiosity subsided; Paine became an old story. He left Lovett's Hotel for humble lodgings in the house of a free-thinking farrier. Thenceforward the tale of his life is soon told. He went rarely to his farm at New Rochelle; he disliked the country and the trouble of keeping house; and a bullet which whizzed through his window one Christmas Eve, narrowly missing his head, did not add agreeable associations to the place. In the city he moved his quarters from one low boarding-house to another, and generally managed to quarrel with the blacksmiths, bakers, and butchers, his landlords. Unable to enjoy society suited to his abilities and large experience of life, Paine called in low company to help him bear the burden of existence. To the men who surrounded him, his opinions on all subjects were conclusive, and his shrewd sayings revelations. Among these respectful listeners, he had to fear neither incredulity nor disputation. Like his friend Elihu Palmer, and the celebrated Dr. Priestley, Paine would not tolerate contradiction. To differ with him was, in his eyes, simply to be deficient in understanding. He was like the French lady who naïvely told Dr. Franklin, "*Je ne trouve que moi qui aie toujours raison*." Professing to adore Reason, he was angry, if anybody reasoned with him. But herein he was no exception to the general rule,—that we find no persons so intolerant and illiberal as men professing liberal principles.

His occupation and amusement was to write for the papers

articles of a somewhat caustic and personal nature. Whatever subject occupied the public mind interested Paine and provoked his remarks. He was bitter in his attacks upon the Federalists and Burrites for attempting to jockey Jefferson out of the Presidency. Later, when Burr was acquitted of treason, Paine found fault with Chief-Justice Marshall for his rulings during the trial, and gave him notice, that he (Marshall) was "a suspected character." He also requested Dr. Mitchell, then United States Senator for New York, to propose an amendment to the Constitution, authorizing the President to remove a judge, on the address of a majority of both houses of Congress, for reasonable cause, when sufficient grounds for impeachment might not exist. General Miranda's filibustering expedition against Caracas, a greater failure even than the Lopez raid on Cuba, furnished Paine with a theme. He wrote a sensible paper on the yellow fever, by request of Jefferson, and one or two on his iron bridge. He was ardent in the defence of Mr. Jefferson's pet scheme of a gun-boat navy, and ridiculed the idea of fortifying New York. "The cheapest way," he said, "to fortify New York will be to banish the scoundrels that infest it." The inhabitants of that city would do well, if they could find an engineer to fortify their island in this way.

When the Pennsylvanians called a Convention in 1805 to amend the Constitution of the State, Paine addressed them at some length, giving them a summary of his views on Government, Constitutions, and Charters. The Creoles of Louisiana sent to Congress a memorial of their "rights," in

which they included the importation of African slaves. Paine was indignant at this perversion of his favorite specific for all political ailments, and took the Franco-Americans soundly to task:—"How dare you put up a petition to Heaven for such a power, without fearing to be struck from the earth by its justice?" It is manifest that Paine could not be a Democrat in good standing now. Mingled with these graver topics were side-blows at the emissary Cullen, *alias* Carpenter, an Englishman, who edited a Federal paper,—replies to Cheetham, reprimands to Cheetham, and threats to prosecute Cheetham for lying, "unless he makes a public apology,"—and three letters to Governor Morgan Lewis, who had incensed Paine by bringing an action for political libel against a Mr. Thomas Farmer, laying his damages at one hundred thousand dollars.

Among his last productions were two memorials to the House of Representatives. One can see in these papers that old age had weakened his mind, and that harsh treatment had soured his feelings towards the land of his adoption.

> "Ma république à jamais grande et libre,
> Cette terre d'amour et d'égalité,"

no longer seemed to him as lovely as when he composed these verses for a Fourth-of-July dinner in Paris. He claimed compensation for his services in Colonel Laurens's mission to France in 1781. For his works he asked no reward. "All the

civilized world knows," he writes, "I have been of great service to the United States, and have generously given away talents that would have made me a fortune. The country has been benefited, and I make myself happy in the knowledge of it. It is, however, proper for me to add, that the mere independence of America, were it to have been followed by a system of government modelled after the corrupt system of the English government, would not have interested me with the unabated ardor it did." "It will be convenient to me to know what Congress will decide on, because it will determine me, whether, after so many years of generous services and that in the most perilous times, and after seventy years of age, I shall continue in this country, or offer my services to some other country. It will not be to England, unless there should be a revolution."

The memorial was referred to the Committee on Claims. When Paine heard of its fate, he addressed an indignant letter to the Speaker of the House. "I know not who the Committee on Claims are; but if they were men of younger standing than 'the times that tried men's souls,' and consequently too young to know what the condition of the country was at the time I published 'Common Sense,'—for I do not believe that independence would have been declared, had it not been for the effect of that work, —they are not capable of judging of the whole of the services of Thomas Paine. If my memorial was referred to the Committee on Claims for the purpose of losing it, it is unmanly policy. After so many years of service, my heart grows cold towards America."

His heart was soon to grow cold to all the world. In the spring of 1809, it became evident to Paine's attendants that his end was approaching. As death drew near, the memories of early youth arose vividly in his mind. He wished to be buried in the cemetery of the Quakers, in whose principles his father had educated him. He sent for a leading member of the sect to ask a resting-place for his body in their ground. The request was refused.

When the news got abroad that the Arch-Infidel was dying, foolish old women and kindred clergymen, who "knew no way to bring home a wandering sheep but by worrying him to death," gathered together about his bed. Even his physician joined in the hue-and-cry. It was a scene of the Inquisition adapted to North America,—a Protestant *auto da fé*. The victim lay helpless before his persecutors; the agonies of disease supplied the place of rack and fagot. But nothing like a recantation could be wrung from him. And so his tormentors left him alone to die, and his freethinking smiths and cobblers rejoiced over his fidelity to the cause.

He was buried on his farm at New Rochelle, according to his latest wishes. "Thomas Paine. Author of 'Common Sense,'" the epitaph he had fixed upon, was carved upon his tomb. A better one exists from an unknown hand, which tells, in a jesting way, the secret of the sorrows of his later life:—

> "Here lies Tom Paine, who wrote in liberty's defence,
> And in his 'Age of Reason' lost his 'Common Sense.'"

Ten years after, William Cobbett, who had left England in a fit of political disgust and had settled himself on Long Island to raise hogs and ruta-bagas, resolved to go home again. Cobbett had become an admirer, almost a disciple of Paine. The "Constitution-grinder" of '96 was now "a truly great man, a truly philosophical politician, a mind as far superior to Pitt and Burke as the light of a flambeau is superior to that of a rush-light." Above all, Paine had been Cobbett's teacher on financial questions. In 1803, Cobbett read his "Decline and Fall of the English System," and then "saw the whole matter in its true light; and neither pamphleteers nor speech-makers were after that able to raise a momentary puzzle in his mind." Perhaps Cobbett thought he might excite a sensation in England and rally about him the followers of Paine, or it may be that he wished to repair the gross injustice he had done him by some open act of adherence; at all events, he exhumed Paine's body and took the bones home with him in 1819, with the avowed intention of erecting a magnificent monument to his memory by subscription. In the same manner, about two thousand two hundred and fifty years ago, the bones of Theseus, the mythical hero of Democracy, were brought from Skyros to Athens by some Attic [Greek: Kobbetaes]. The description of the arrival in England we quote from a Liverpool journal of the day:—"When his last trunk was opened at the Custom-House, Cobbett observed to the surrounding spectators, who had

assembled in great numbers,—'Here are the bones of the late Thomas Paine.' This declaration excited a visible sensation, and the crowd pressed forward to see the contents of the package. Cobbett remarked,—'Great, indeed, must that man have been whose very bones attract such attention!' The officer took up the coffin-plate inscribed, 'Thomas Paine, Aged 72. Died January 8, 1809,' and, having lifted up several of the bones, replaced the whole and passed them. They have since been forwarded from this town to London."

At a public dinner given to Cobbett in Liverpool, Paine was toasted as "the Noble of Nature, the Child of the Lower Orders"; but the monument was never raised, and no one knows where his bones found their last resting-place.

Cobbett himself gained nothing by this resurrectionist performance, except an additional couplet in the party-songs of the day:—

> "Let Cobbett of borough-corruption complain,
> And go to the De'il with the bones of Tom Paine."

The two were classed together by English Conservatives, as "pestilent fellows" and "promoters of sedition."

It is now fifty years since Paine died; but the *nil de mortuis* is no rule in his case. The evil associations of his later days have pursued him beyond the grave. A small and threadbare sect of "liberals," as they call themselves,—men in whom want of skill,

industry, and thrift has produced the usual results,—have erected an altar to Thomas Paine, and, on the anniversary of his birth, go through with a pointless celebration, which passes unnoticed, unless in an out-of-the-way corner of some newspaper. In this class of persons, irreligion is a mere form of discontent. They have no other reason to give for the faith which is not in them. They like to ascribe their want of success in life to something out of joint in the thoughts and customs of society, rather than to their own shortcomings or incapacity. In France, such persons would be Socialists and *Rouges*; in this country, where the better classes only have any reason to rebel, they cannot well conspire against government, but attack religion instead, and pride themselves on their exemption from prejudice. The "Age of Reason" is their manual. Its bold, clear, simple statements they can understand; its shallowness they are too ignorant to perceive; its coarseness is in unison with their manners. Thus the author has become the Apostle of Free-thinking tinkers and the Patron Saint of unwashed Infidelity.

To this generation at large, he is only an indistinct shadow,—a faint reminiscence of a red nose,—an ill-flavored name, redolent of brandy and of brimstone, his beverage in life and his well-earned punishment in eternity, which suggests to the serious mind dirt, drunkenness, and hopeless damnation. Mere worldlings call him "Tom Paine," in a tone which combines derision and contempt. A bust of him, by Jarvis, in the possession of the New York Historical Society, is kept under lock and key,

because it was defaced and defiled by visitors, while a dozen other plaster worthies that decorate the institution remained intact. Nevertheless, we suspect that most of our readers, if they cannot date back to the first decade of the century, will find, when they sift their information, that they have only a speaking acquaintance with Thomas Paine, and can give no good reason for their dislike of him.

And it is not easy for the general reader to become intimate with him. He will find him, of course, in Biographical Dictionaries, Directories of the City of the Great Dead, which only tell you where men lived, and what they did to deserve a place in the volume; but as to a life of him, strictly speaking, there is none. Oldys and Cobbett tried to flay him alive in pamphlets; Sherwin and Clio Rickman were prejudiced friends and published only panegyrics. All are out of print and difficult to find. Cheetham's work is a political libel; and the attempt of Mr. Vail of the "Beacon" to canonize him in the "Infidel's Calendar," cannot be recommended to intelligent persons. We might expect to meet with him in those books of lives so common with us,—collections in which a certain number of deceased gentlemen are bound up together, so resembling each other in feature that one might suppose the narratives ground out by some obituary-machine and labelled afterward to suit purchasers. Even this "sign-post biography," as the "Quarterly" calls it, Paine has escaped. He was not a marketable commodity. There was no demand for him in polite circles. The implacable hand of

outraged orthodoxy was against him. Hence his memory has lain in the gutter. Even his friend Joel Barlow left him out of the "Columbiad," to the great disgust of Clio Rickman, who thought his name should have appeared in the Fifth Book between Washington and Franklin. Surely Barlow might have found room for him in the following "Epic List of Heroes":—

> "Wythe, Mason, Pendleton, with Henry joined,
> Rush, Rodney, Langdon, friends of humankind,
> Persuasive Dickinson, the farmer's boast,
> Recording Thompson, pride of all the host,
> Nash, Jay, the Livingstons, in council great,
> Rutledge and Laurens, held the rolls of fate."

But no! Neither author nor authorling liked to have his name seen in company with Thomas Paine. And when a curious compiler has taken him up, he has held him at arm's length, and, after eyeing him cautiously, has dropped him like some unclean and noxious animal.

Sixty years ago, Paine's friends used to say, that, "in spite of some indiscreet writings on the subject of religion," he deserved the respect and thanks of Americans for his services. We think that he deserves something more at the present day than this absolute neglect. There is stuff enough in him for one volume at least. His career was wonderful, even for the age of miraculous events he lived in. In America, he was a Revolutionary hero of the first rank, who carried letters in his pocket from George

Washington, thanking him for his services. And he managed besides to write his radical name in large letters in the History of England and of France. As a mere literary workman, his productions deserve notice. In mechanics, he invented and put up the first iron bridge of large span in England; the boldness of the attempt still excites the admiration of engineers. He may urge, too, another claim to our attention. In the legion of "most remarkable men" these United States have produced or imported, only three have achieved infamy: Arnold, Burr, and Paine. What are Paine's titles to belong to this trio of disreputables? Only these three: he wrote the "Age of Reason"; was a Democrat, perhaps an unusually dirty one; and drank more brandy than was good for him. The "Age of Reason" is a shallow deistical essay, in which the author's opinions are set forth, it is true, in a most offensive and irreverent style. As Dr. Hopkins wrote of Ethan Allen,—

> "One hand was clenched to batter noses,
> While t'other scrawled 'gainst Paul and Moses."

But who reads it now? On the other hand, no one who has studied Paine's career can deny his honesty and his disinterestedness; and every unprejudiced reader of his works must admit not merely his great ability in urging his opinions, but that he sincerely believed all he wrote. Let us, then, try to forget the carbuncled nose, the snuffy waistcoat, the unorthodox

sneer. We should wipe out his later years, cut his life short at 1796, and take Paine when he wrote "Common Sense," Paine when he lounged at the White Bear in Piccadilly, talking over with Horne Tooke the answer to Mr. Burke's "Reflections," and Paine, when, as "foreign benefactor of the species," he took his seat in the famous French Convention.

It would repay some capable author to dig him up, wash him, and show him to the world as he was. A biography of him would embrace the history of the struggle which established the new theory of politics in government. He is the representative man of Democracy in both hemispheres,—a good subject in the hands of a competent artist; and the time has arrived, we think, when justice may be done him. As a general rule, it is yet too soon to write the History of the United States since 1784. Half a century has not been sufficient to wear out the bitter feeling excited by the long struggle of Democrats and Federalists. Respectable gentlemen, who, more pious than Aeneas, have undertaken to carry their grandfathers' remains from the ruins of the past into the present era, seem to be possessed with the same demon of discord that agitated the deceased ancestors. The quarrels of the first twenty years of the Constitution have become chronic ink-feuds in certain families. A literary *vendetta* is carried on to this day, and a stab with the steel pen, or a shot from behind the safe cover of a periodical, is certain to be received by any one of them who offers to his enemy the glorious opportunity of a book. Where so much temper exists, impartial history is out of

the question.

Our authors, too, as a general rule, have inherited the political jargon of the last century, and abound in "destiny of humanity," "inalienable rights," "virtue of the sovereign people," "base and bloody despots," and all that sort of phrase, earnest and real enough once, but little better than cant and twaddle now. They seem to take it for granted that the question is settled, the rights of man accurately defined, the true and only theory of government found,—and that he who doubts is blinded by aristocratic prejudice or is a fool. We must say, nevertheless, that Father Time has not yet had years enough to answer the great question of governing which was proposed to him in 1789. Some of the developments of our day may well make us doubt whether the last and perfect form, or even theory, is the one we have chosen. "*Les monarchies absolues avaient deshonoré le despotisme: prenons garde que les républiques démocratiques ne le réhabilitent.*" But Paine's part in the history of this country after 1783 is of so small importance, that in a life of him all such considerations may be safely waived. The democratic movement of the last eighty years, be it a "finality," or only a phase of progress towards a more perfect state, is the grand historical fact of modern times, and Paine's name is intimately connected with it. One is always ready to look with lenity on the partiality of a biographer,—whether he urge the claims of his hero to a niche in the Valhalla of great men, or act as the *Advocatus Diaboli* to degrade his memory.

OF BOOKS AND THE READING THEREOF

BEING A THIRD LETTER FROM PAUL POTTER, OF NEW YORK, IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF NEW YORK, ESQ., TO THE DON ROBERTO WAGONERO, OF WASHINGTON, *olim*, BUT *nunc* OF NOWHEREINPARTICULAR.

If any person, O my Bobus, had foretold that all these months would go by before I should again address you, he would have exhibited prescient talent great enough to establish twenty "mediums" in a flourishing cabalistic business. Alas! they have been to me months of fathomless distress, immensurate and immeasurable sorrow, and blank, blind, idiotic indifference, even to books and friends, which, next to the nearest and dearest, are the world's most priceless possession. But now that I have a little thrown off the stupor, now that kindly Time has a little balmed my cruel wounds, I come back to my books and to you,—to the *animi remissionem* of Cicero,—to these gentle sympathizers and faithful solacements,—to old studies and ancient pursuits. There is a Latin line, I know not whose, but Swift was fond of quoting it,—

"Vertiginosus, inops, surdus, male gratus amicis,"—

which I have whispered to myself, with prophetic lips, in the

long, long watches of my lonesome nights. Do you remember—but who that has read it does not?—that affecting letter, written upon the death of his wife, by Sir James Mackintosh to Dr. Parr? "Such was she whom I have lost; and I have lost her when her excellent natural sense was rapidly improving, after eight years of struggle and distress had bound us fast together and moulded our tempers to each other,—when a knowledge of her worth had refined my youthful love into friendship, before age had deprived it of much of its original ardor. I lost her, alas! (the choice of my youth, and the partner of my misfortunes,) at a moment when I had the prospect of her sharing my better days."

But if I am getting old, although perhaps prematurely, I must be casting about for the *subsidia senectuti*. Swift wrote to Gay, that these were "two or three servants about you and a convenient house"; justly observing, that, "when a man grows hard to please, few people care whether he be pleased or no"; and adding, sadly enough, "I should hardly prevail to find one visitor, if I were not able to hire him with a bottle of wine"; and so the sorrowful epistle concludes with the sharpest grief of all: "My female friends, who could bear with me very well a dozen years ago, have now forsaken me." It is odd that Montaigne should have hit upon the wine also as among the *subsidia senectuti*; although the sage Michael complains, as you will remember, that old men do not relish their wine, or at least the first glass, because "the palate is furred with phlegms." But I care little either for the liquor or the lackeys, and not much, I fear, at present, for "the female friends."

I have, then, nothing left for it but to take violently to books; for I doubt not I shall find almost any house convenient, and I am sure of one at last which I can claim by a title not to be disturbed by all the precedents of Cruise, and in which no mortal shall have a contingent remainder.

To books, then, I betake myself,—to books, "the immortal children" of "the understanding, courage, and abilities" of the wise and good,—ay! and to inane, drivelling, doting books, the bastard progeny of vanity and ignorance,—books over which one dawdles in an amusing dream and pleasant spasm of amazement, and which teach us wisdom as tipsy Helots taught the Spartan boys sobriety. Montaigne "never travelled without books, either in peace or war"; and as I found them pleasant in happier days, so I find them pleasant now. Of course, much of this omnivorous reading is from habit, and, *invitâ Minervâ*, cannot be dignified by the name of study,—that stiff, steady, persistent, uncompromising application of the mind, by virtue of which alone the *Pons Asinorum* can be crossed, and the Forty-Seventh Problem of Euclid—which I entirely disbelieve—mastered.

I own to a prodigious respect, entertained since my Sophomore year at the University, for those collegiate youth whose terribly hard study of Bourdon and Legendre seems to have such a mollifying effect upon their heads,—but, as the tradesmen say, that thing is "not in my line." I would rather have a bundle of bad verses which have been consigned to the pastry-cook. I suppose—for I have been told so upon good authority —

that, if "equals be taken from equals, the remainders are equal." I do not see why they should not be, and, as a citizen of the United States of America, the axiom seems to me to be entitled to respect. When a youthful person, with a piece of chalk in his hand, before commencing his artistic and scientific achievements upon the black-board, says: "Let it be granted that a straight line may be drawn from any one point to any other point," I invariably answer, "Of course,—by all manner of means,"—although you know, dear Don, that, if I should put him upon mathematical proof of the postulate, I might bother him hugely. But when we come to the Fourteenth Proposition of Euclid's Data,—when I am required to admit, that, "if a magnitude together with a given magnitude has a given ratio to another magnitude, the excess of this other magnitude above a given magnitude has a given ratio to the first magnitude; and if the excess of a magnitude above a given magnitude has a given ratio to another magnitude, this other magnitude together with a given ratio to the first magnitude,"—I own to a slight confusion of my intellectual faculties, and a perfect contempt for John Buteo and Ptolemy. Then, there is Butler's "Analogy"; an excellent work it is, I have been told,—a charming work to master,—quite a bulwark of our faith; but as, in my growing days, it was explained to me, or rather was not explained, before breakfast, by a truculent Doctor of Divinity, whom I knew to be ugly and felt to be great, of course, the good Bishop and I are not upon the best of terms.

I suppose that for drilling, training, and pipe-claying the

human mind all these things are necessary. I suppose, that, in our callow days, it is proper that we should be birched and wear fetters upon our little, bandy, sausage-like legs. But let me, now that I have come to man's estate, flout my old pedagogues, and, playing truant at my will, dawdle or labor, walk, skip, or run, go to my middle in quagmires, or climb to the hill-tops, take liberties with the venerable, snub the respectable, and keep the company of the disreputable,—dismiss the Archbishop without reading his homily,—pass by a folio in twenty grenadier volumes to greet a little black-coated, yellow-faced duodecimo, —speak to the forlorn and forsaken, who have been doing dusty penance upon cloistered shelves in silent alcoves for a century, with none so poor to do them reverence,—read here one little catch which came from lips long ago as silent as the clod which they are kissing, and there some forgotten fragment of history, too insignificant to make its way into the world's magnificent chronologies,—snapping up unconsidered trifles of anecdote,—tasting some long-interred *bon-mot* and relishing some disentombed scandal,—pausing over the symphonic prose of Milton, only to run, the next moment, to the Silenian ribaldry of Tom Brown the younger,—and so keeping up a Saturnalia, in which goat-footed sylvans mix with the maidens of Diana, and the party-colored jester shakes his truncheon in the face of Plato. Only in this wild and promiscuous license can we taste the genuine joys of true perusal.

I suppose, my dear friend, that, when you were younger

and foolisher than you now are, you were wont, after the reading of some dismal work upon diet and health, to take long, constitutional walks. You "toddled"—pardon the vulgar word!—so many miles out and so many miles in, at just such a pace, in just the prescribed time, during hours fixed as the Fates; and you wondered, when you came home to your Graham bread and cold water, that you did not bring an appetite with you. You had performed incredible pedestrian achievements, and were not hungry, but simply weary. It is of small use to try to be good with malice prepense. Nature is nothing, if not natural. If I am to read to any purpose, I must read with a relish, and browse at will with the bridle off. Sometimes I go into a library, the slow accretion of a couple of centuries, or perhaps the mushroom growth from a rich man's grave, a great collection magically convoked by the talisman of gold. At the threshold, as I ardently enter, the flaming sword of regulation is waving. Between me and the inviting shelves are fences of woven iron; the bibliographic Cerberus is at his sentryship; when I want a full draught, I must be content with driblets; and the impatient messengers are sworn to bring me only a single volume at a time. To read in such a hampered and limited way is not to read at all; and I go back, after the first fret and worry are over, to the little collection upon my garret-shelf, to greet again the old familiar pages. I leave the main army behind,—"the lordly band of mighty folios," "the well-ordered ranks of the quartos," "the light octavos," and "humbler duodecimos," for

"The last new play, and frittered magazine,"—

for the sutlers and camp-followers, "pioneers and all," of the grand army,—for the prizes, dirty, but curious, rescued from the street-stall, or unearthed in a Nassau-Street cellar,—for the books which I thumbed and dogs-eared in my youth.

I have, in my collection, a little Divinity, consisting mostly of quaint Quaker books bequeathed to me by my grandmother,—a little Philosophy, a little Physic, a little Law, a little History, a little Fiction, and a deal of Nondescript stuff. Once, when the *res angusta domi* had become *angustissima*, a child of Israel was, in my sore estate, summoned to inspect the dear, shabby colony, and to make his sordid aureat or argent bid therefor. Well do I remember how his nose, which he could not, if his worthless life had depended upon it, render *retroussé*, grew sublimely curvilinear in its contempt, as his hawk-eyes estimated my pitiful family. I will not name the sum which he offered, the ghoul, the vampire, the anthropophagous jackal, the sneaking would-be incendiary of my little Alexandrian, the circumcised Goth! He left me, like Churchill's Scotch lassie, "pleased, but hungry"; and I found, as Valentine did in Congreve's "Love for Love," "a page doubled down in Epictetus which was a feast for an emperor."

I own, my excellent Robert, that a bad book is, to my taste, sometimes vastly more refreshing than a good one. I do not wonder that Crabbe, after he had so sadly failed in his medical

studies, should have anathematized the medical writers in this fine passage:—

> "Ye frigid tribe, on whom I waited long
> The tedious hours, and ne'er indulged in song!
> Ye first seducers of my easy heart,
> Who promised knowledge ye could not impart!
> Ye dull deluders, Truth's destructive foes!
> Ye Sons of Fiction, clad in stupid prose!
> Ye treacherous leaders, who, yourselves in doubt,
> Light up false fires, and send us far about!—
> Still may yon spider round your pages spin,
> Subtle and slow, her emblematic gin!
> Buried in dust and lost in silence dwell!
> Most potent, grave, and reverend friends,—farewell!"

I acknowledge the vigor of these lines, which nobody could have written who had not been compelled, in the sunny summer-days, to bray drugs in a mortar. Yet who does not like to read a medical book?—to pore over its jargon, to muddle himself into a hypo, and to imagine himself afflicted with the dreadful disease with the long Latin name, the meaning of which he does not by any means comprehend? And did not the poems of our friend Bavius Blunderbore, Esq., which were of "a low and moderate sort," cause you to giggle yourself wellnigh into an asphyxy,—calf and coxcomb as he was? Is not –'s last novel a better antidote against melancholy, stupendously absurd as it is, than foalfoot

or plantain, featherfew or savin, agrimony or saxifrage, or any other herb in old Robert Burton's pharmacopoeia? I am afraid that we are a little wanting in gratitude, when we shake our sides at the flaying of Marsyas by some Quarterly of Apollo,—to the dis-cuticlcd, I mean. If he had not piped so stridently, we should not have had half so much sport; yet small largess does the miserable minstrel get for tooting tunelessly. Let us honor the brave who fall in the battle of print. 'Twas a noble ambition, after all, which caused our asinine friend to cloak himself in that cast leonine skin. Who would be always reciting from a hornbook to Mistress Minerva? What, I pray you, would become of the corn, if there were no scarecrows? All honor to you, then, my looped and windowed sentinel, standing upon the slope of Parnassus,—standing so patiently there, with your straw bowels, doing yeoman-service, spite of the flouts and gibes and cocked thumbs of Zoïlus and his sneering, snarling, verjuicy, captious crew,—standing there, as stood the saline helpmate of Lot, to fright our young men and virgins from the primrose-pitfalls of Poesy,—standing there to warn them against the seductions of Phoebus, and to teach them that it is better to hoe than to hum!

The truth is, that the good and clever and *polyphloisboic* writers have too long monopolized the attention of the world, so that the little, well-intentioned, humble, and stupid plebeians of the guild have been snubbed out of sight. Somebody—the name is not given, but I shrewdly suspect Canon Smith—wrote to Sir James Mackintosh,—"Why do you not write three volumes

quarto? You only want this to be called the greatest man of your time. People are all disposed to admit anything we say of you, but I think it unsafe and indecent to put you so high without something in quarto." This was, of course, half fun and half truth. As there is, however, little need of setting the world on fire to demonstrate some chemical theory, so it is possible that the flame of culture may be cherished without kindling a conflagration, and truth transmitted from sire to son without the construction of edificial monsters too big for the knees, too abstruse for the brains, and too great for the lifetime of humanity. I am not a very constant reader of Mr. Robert Browning, but I own to many a pleasant grin over his Sibrandus Schafnabrugensis dropped into the crevice of the plum-tree, and afterward pitifully reclaimed, and carried to its snug niche with the promise,—

> "A.'s book shall prop you up, B.'s shall cover you,
> Here's C. to be grave with, or D. to be gay;
> And with E. on each side, and F. right over you,
> Dry-rot at ease till the Judgment Day!"

How often, when one is roving through a library in search of adventures, is he encountered by some inflated champion of huge proportions, who turns out to be no better than a barber, after all! Gazing upon

> "That weight of wood, with leathern coat o'erlaid,
> Those ample clasps, of solid metal made,

The close-pressed leaves, unloosed for many an age,
The dull red edging of the well-filled page,
On the broad back the stubborn ridges rolled,
Where yet the title stands, in burnished gold,"—

what wisdom, what wit, what profundity, what vastness of knowledge, what a grand gossip concerning all things, and more beside, did we anticipate, only to find the promise broken, and a big impostor with no more muscle than the black drone who fills the pipes and sentries the seraglio of the Sophi or the Sultan! The big, burly beggars! For a century nobody has read them, and therefore everybody has admitted them to be great. They are bulky paradoxes, and find a good reputation in neglect,—as some fools pass for philosophers by preserving a close mouth and a grave countenance.

"Safe in themselves, the ponderous works remain."

It was a keen sense of this disproportion between size and sense which barbed the sharpest arrows of Dr. Swift. Nobody ever imposed upon him either by bigness or by bluster. "The Devil take stupidity," once cried the Dean of St. Patrick's, "that it will not come in to supply the want of philosophy!" So in the Introduction to "The Tale of a Tub," he, half in jest and half in earnest, declares that "wisdom is like a cheese, whereof to a judicious taste the maggots are the best." *Vive la bagatelle!* trembled upon his lips at the age of threescore; and he amused

himself with reading the most trifling books he could find, and writing upon the most trifling subjects. Lord Bolingbroke wrote to him to beg him "to put on his philosophical spectacles," and wrote with but small success. Pope wrote to him, "to beg it of him, as a piece of mercy, that he would not laugh at his gravity, but permit him to wear the beard of a philosopher until he pulled it off and made a jest of it himself." Old Weymouth, in the latter part of Anne's reign, said to him, in his lordly Latin, "*Philosopha verba ignava opera,*" and Swift frequently repeated the sarcasm. One cannot figure him as the "laughing old man" of Anacreon, for there was certainly a dreadful dash of vinegar in his composition; but if he did not hate hard enough, hit hard enough, and weigh men, motives, and books, nicely enough to satisfy Dr. Johnson, the Bolt-Courtier must have been a very leech of verjuice. There is a passage in one of his letters to Pope,—I cannot just now put my hand upon it,—in which he suggests, in rather coarse language, the subject of "The Beggar's Opera" as a capital subject for their common friend, Gay. And yet one can barely suppress a sigh at all this luxury of levity, when he remembers that dreadful "*Ubi saeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit*," and reflects upon the hope deferred which vented itself in that stinging couplet,—

"In every court the parallel will hold; And kings, like private folks, are bought and sold."

I remember a hack-writer,—and of such, I am afraid, is too exclusively my literary kingdom,—who classified

the vices which Swift smote so fearfully in "The Voyage to the Houyhnhnms"; and the curious catalogue contained "avarice, fraud, cheating, violence, rapine, extortion, cruelty, oppression, tyranny, rancor, envy, malice, detraction, hatred, revenge, murder, bribery, corruption, pimping, lying, perjury, subornation, treachery, ingratitude, gaming, flattery, drunkenness, gluttony, luxury, vanity, effeminacy, cowardice, pride, impudence, hypocrisy, infidelity, blasphemy, idolatry, and innumerable other vices, many of them the notorious characteristics of the bulk of humankind." Delightful catalogue! How odd, indeed, that a man with such work to do should not have sported with Amaryllis, or played with the tangles of Neaera's hair,—should not have worn well-anointed love-locks and snowy linen,—should, on the other hand, have bared his brawny arm, and sent the hissing flail down swiftly upon the waled and blistered back of Sham! How much better would it have been, if he had written a history, in twelve elephantine volumes, of the rise, culmination, and decay of the Empire of Barataria, which we would have gone to prison, the rack, and the drop, with rapture rather than read!

How low seems Fielding, with his pot-house heroes, Tom Jones, Squire Western, and Jonathan Wild, when we contrast them with the elegant, cleanly-polished, and extremely proper Sir Charles Grandison! What a coarse drab is Molly Seagrim, when juxtaposited with the princess of all prudes, the indomitably virtuous Pamela! How childish was it of Cowper to sing of

sofas, poultry, rabbits, orchards, meadows, and barnyards! How much more nobly employed was John Dryden in manufacturing a brand-new, truculent, loud-voiced, massively-calved, ensiferous Alexander! Who but an addle-headed sot would have wandered up and down the lanes, like Morland, chalking out pigs and milkmaids, when he might have been painting, like Barry, pictures, by the acre, of gods and goddesses enacting incomprehensible allegories! Let us be respectable, O my Bobus, and wear good coats and the best hats to be had for money or upon credit; let us carefully conceal our connection with "The Gotham Revolver," although the honest people who print it do give us our beer and mutton; let us write great histories which nobody will read, engage in tractations to which nobody will listen, build twelve-storied epics which nobody will publish, and invent Gordian philosophies which nobody can untie. Surely it is quite time for Minerva to have a general house-cleaning, to put on a fresh smock, and to live cleanly. Rabelais shall be washed, and Sterne sad-ironed into gravity; De Foe shall be made as decorous as a tract; Mandeville shall be reburned, and we will kindle the fire with half the leaves of this dry and yellow Montaigne. Nobody shall approach the waters of Castaly save upon stilts; and whoever may giggle, as he takes his physic, shall be put upon a dreadfully plentiful allowance of Guieciardini for bread, and of the poems of – – for water.

But, alas! Brother Bobus, where to begin our purification, and where to end it? We may, like the curate in "Don

Quixote," reprieve Amadis de Gaul, but shall we, therefore, make Esplandian, "his lawful-begotten son," a foundation for the funeral-pile we are to set a-blazing presently? To be sure, there is sense in the observation of the good and holy priest upon that memorable occasion. "This," said the barber, "is Amadis of Greece; and it is my opinion that all those upon this side are of the same family." "Then pitch them all into the yard," responded the priest; "for, rather than miss the satisfaction of roasting Queen Pintiquiniestra and the pastorals of Darinel the Shepherd and his damned unintelligible speculations, I would burn my own father along with them, if I found him playing at knight-errantry." So into the yard went "Olivante de Laura, the nonsensical old blockhead," "rough and dull Florismart of Hyrcania," "noble Don Platir," with nothing in him "deserving a grain of pity," Bernardo del Carpio, and Roncesvalles, and Palmerin de Oliva. What a delicious scene it is! The fussy barber, tired of reading titles and proceeding to burn by wholesale, passing down books in armfuls to the eager housekeeper, more ready to burn them than ever she had been to weave the finest lace. And how charming is the hit of the Curate! "Certainly, these cannot be books of knight-errantry, they are too small; you'll find they are only poets,"—the supplication of the niece that the singers should not be spared, lest her uncle, when cured of his knight-errantry, should read them, become a shepherd, and wander through forests and fields,—"nay, and what is more to be dreaded, turn poet, which is said to be a disease absolutely incurable." So

down went "the longer poems" of Diana de Montemayor, the whole of Salmantino, with the Iberian Shepherd and the Nymphs of Henares. The impatience of the curate, who, completely worn out, orders all the rest to be burned *á canga cerrada*, fitly rounds the chapter, and sends us in good-humor from the *auto da fé*, while the poor knight is in his bedchamber, all unconscious of the purification in progress, which, if he had known it, mad as he was, would have made his madness starker still, thrashing about with his sword, back-stroke and fore-stroke, and, as Motteux translates it, "making a heavy bustle." 'Tis all droll enough; especially when we find that the housekeeper made such clean work of it in the evening, in spite of the good curate's reservations, and burnt all the books, not only those in the yard, but all those that were in the house; but I should think twice before I let Freston the necromancer into any library with which I am acquainted.

Let us be gentle with the denizens of Fame's proud temple, no matter how they came there. You remember, I suppose, Swift's couplet,—

> "Fame has but two gates,—a white and a black one;
> The worst they can say is I got in at the back one."

"I have nothing," wrote Pope to his friend Cromwell, "to say to you in this latter; but I was resolved to write to tell you so. Why should not I content myself with so many great examples of deep

divines, profound casuists, grave philosophers, who have written, not letters only, but whole tomes and voluminous treatises about nothing? Why should a fellow like me, who all his life does nothing, be ashamed to write nothing, and that, too, to one who has nothing to do but read it?" And so, with "*ex nihilo nil fit*," he laughingly ends his letter.

And now, while I am at it, I must quote a passage, somewhat germane, from the very next letter, which Pope wrote to the same friend:—"You talk of fame and glory, and of the great men of antiquity. Pray, tell me, what are all your great dead men, but so many living letters? What a vast reward is here for all the ink wasted by writers and all the blood spilt by princes! There was in old time one Severus, a Roman Emperor. I dare say you never called him by any other name in your life; and yet in his days he was styled Lucius, Septimius, Severus, Pius, Pertinax, Augustus, Parthicus, Adiabenicus, Arabicus, Maximus, and what not? What a prodigious waste of letters has time made! What a number have here dropped off, and left the poor surviving seven unattended! For my own part, four are all I have to take care of; and I'll be judged by you, if any man could live in less compass. Well, for the future, I'll drown all high thoughts in the Lethe of cowslip-wine; as for fame, renown, reputation, take 'em, critics! If ever I seek for immortality here, may I be damn'd, for there's not much danger in a poet's being damn'd,—

'Damnation follows death in other men,

But your damn'd Poet lives and writes agen.'"

And so they do, even unto the present, otherwise blessed day. But, dear old friend, is not this sublime sneering? and is there not an honest ray or two of truth mingled here and there in the colder coruscations of this wit? Of the sincerity of this repudiation and renunciation so fashionable in the Pope circle I have nothing to say; but in certain moods of the mind it is vastly entertaining, and cures one's melancholy as cautery cures certain physical afflictions. It may be amusing for you also to notice that Don Quixote's niece and Pope were of the same mind. She called poetry "a catching and incurable disease," and Pope's unfortunate Poet "lives and writes agen."

And, after all, Bobus, why should we not be tender with all the gentlemen who crowd the catalogues and slumber upon the shelves? It may be all very well for you or me, whose legend should be

"Prandeo, poto, cano, ludo, lego, coeno, quiesco,"

to laugh at them; but who shall say that they did not do their best, and, if they were stupid, pavonian, arrogant, self-sufficient, and top-heavy, that they were not honestly so? I always liked that boast of Flaccus about his "monument harder than brass." It is a cheerful sight to see a poor devil of an author in his garret, snapping his fingers at the critics. "No beggar," wrote Pope, "is so poor but he can keep a cur, and no author so beggarly but

he can keep a critic." And, after all, abuse is pleasanter than contemptuous and silent neglect. I do honestly believe, that, if it were not for a little too much false modesty, every author, and especially the poets, would boldly and publicly anticipate posthumous fame. Do you think that Sir Thomas Urquhart, when he wrote his "[Greek: EKSKUBALAURON], or, The Discovery of a most Precious Jewel," etc., fancied that the world would willingly let his reverberating words faint into whispers, and, at last, into utter silence?—his "metonymical, ironical, metaphorical, and synecdochal instruments of elocution, in all their several kinds, artificially affected, according to the nature of the subject, with emphatical expressions in things of great concernment, with catachrestical in matters of meaner moment; attended on each side respectively with an epiplectic and exegetic modification, with hyperbolical, either epitatically or hypocoristically, as the purpose required to be elated or extenuated, they qualifying metaphors, and accompanied with apostrophes; and, lastly, with allegories of all sorts, whether apologal, affabulatory, parabolary, aenigmatic, or paroemial"? Would you have thought that so much sesquipedality could die? Certainly the Knight of Cromartie did not, and fully believing Posterity would feel an interest in himself unaccorded to any one of his contemporaries, he kindly and prudently appended the pedigree of the family of Urquharts, preserving every step from Adam to himself. This may have been a vanity, but after all it was a good sturdy one, worthy of a gentleman who could not say

"the sun was setting," but who could and did say "our occidental rays of Phoebus were upon their turning oriental to the other hemisphere of the terrestrial globe." Alas! poor Sir Thomas, who must needs babble the foolish hopes which wiser men reticently keep cloistered in their own bosoms! who confessed what every scribbler thinks, and so gets laughed at,—as wantons are carried to the round-house for airing their incontinent phraseology in the street, while Blowsalinda reads romances in her chamber without blushing. Modesty is very well; but, after all, do not the least self-sufficient of us hope for something more than the dirty dollars,—for kindness, affection, loving perusal, and fostering shelter, long after our brains have mouldered, and the light of our eyes has been quenched, and our deft fingers have lost their cunning, and the places that knew us have forgotten our mien and speech and port forever? Very, very few of us can join in Sir Boyle Roche's blundering sneer at posterity, and with the hope of immortality mingles a dread of utter oblivion here. Will it not be consoling, standing close by the graves which have been prepared for us, to leave the world some little legacy of wisdom sedulously gleaned from the fields of the fading past,—some intangible, but honest wealth, the not altogether worthless accumulation of an humble, but earnest life,—something which may lighten the load of a sad experience, illuminate the dark hours which as they have come to all must come to all through all the ages, or at least divert without debauching the mind of the idler, the trifler, and the macaroni? I believe this ingenuous feeling to be very

far removed from the wheezy aspirations of windy ignorance, or the spasms for fame which afflict with colic the bowels, empty and flatulent, of sheer scribblers and dunces who take a mean advantage of the invention of printing. Let us be tender of the honest gentlemen who, to quote Cervantes, "aim at somewhat, but conclude nothing." I cannot smile at the hopes of the boy Burns,—

> "That *he,* for poor auld Scotland's sake,
> Some usefu' plan or beuk could make,
> Or sing a sang at least."

And while I am in a humor for quotation, I must give you this muscular verse from Henry More's "Platonic Song of the Soul": —

> "Their rotten relics lurk close under ground;
> With living weight no sense or sympathy
> They have at all; nor hollow thundering sound
> Of roaring winds that cold mortality
> Can wake, ywrapt in sad Fatality:
> To horse's hoof that beats his grassie dore
> He answers not: the moon in silency
> Doth passe by night, and all bedew him o'er
> With her cold, humid rayes; but he feels not Heaven's power."

How we shiver in the icy, midnight moonbeams of the recluse of Christ's College! How preciously golden seem the links of

our universal brotherhood, when the Fates are waving their dark wings around us, and menace us with their sundering! I am not sure, my worthy Wagonero, that, rather than see my own little cord finally cut, I would not consent to be laughed at by a dozen generations, in the hope that it might happen to me that the thirteenth, out of sheer weariness at the prolonged lampooning, might grow pitiful at my purgatorial experiences, and so betake itself to nursing and fondling me into repute, furnishing me with half-a-dozen of those lynx-eyed commentators who would discern innumerable beauties and veracities through the calfskin walls of my beatified bantling. They might find, at last, that I had "the gold-strung harp of Apollo" and played a "most excellent diapason, celestial music of the spheres,"—hearing the harmony

"As plainly as ever Pythagoras did,"

when "Venus the treble ran sweet division upon Saturn the bass."

Write for posterity! Pray, whom should we write for, in this age which makes its own epic upon sounding anvils, and whose lyric is yelled from the locomotive running a muck through forest and field and beside the waters no longer still? Write poetry now, when noise has become normal, and we are like the Egyptians, who never heard the roaring of the fall of Nilus, because the racket was so familiar to them! The age "capers in its own fee simple" and cries with the Host in "The Merry Devil

of Edmonton," "Away with punctilios and orthography!" Write poetry now! Thank you, my ancient friend! "My fiddlestick cannot play without rosin." To be sure, I am, like most minstrels, ready for an offer; and should any lover of melody propose

> "Two hundred crowns, and twenty pounds a year
> For three good lives,"

I should not be slow in responding, "Cargo! hai Trincalo!" and in presently getting into the best possible trim and tune. But the poet may say now, with the Butler in the old play, "Mine are precious cabinets, and must have precious jewels put into them; and I know you to be merchants of stock-fish, dry meat, and not men for my market; then vanish!"

Barrow said that "poetry was a kind of ingenious nonsense"; and I think, that, deceived by the glut, the present time is very much of Barrow's mind. But, courage, my music-making masters! Your warbling, if it be of genuine quality, shall echo upon the other side of the hill which hides the unborn years. Only be sure, the song be pure; and you may "give the *fico* to your adversaries." You may live in the hearts and upon the lips of men and women yet unborn; and should the worst come, you may figure in "The Bibliographer's Manual," with a star of honor against your name, to indicate that you are exceedingly scarce and proportionally valuable; rival collectors, with fury in their faces, will run you up to a fabulous price at the auction, and you

will at last be put into free quarters for life in some shady alcove upon some lofty shelf, with unlimited rations of dust, as you glide into a vermiculate dotage. Why should you be faint-hearted, when the men of the stalls ask such a breath-stretching price for the productions of William Whitehead, Esq., who used to celebrate the birthdays of old George the Third after this fashion: —

> "And shall the British lyre be mute,
> Nor thrill through all its trembling strings,
> With oaten reed and pastoral flute
> While every vale responsive rings?"

Ben Jonson called Inigo Jones Sir Lanthorn Leatherhead, but St. Paul's still stands; and how many flies are there in the sparkling amber of "The Dunciad"! Have the critics, poor birdling, torn your wings, and mocked at your recording? I know, as Howell wrote to "Father Ben," that "the fangs of a bear and the tusks of a wild-boar don't bite worse and make deeper gashes than a goose-quill sometimes; no, not the badger himself, who is said to be so tenacious of his bite that he will not give over his hold until he feels his teeth meet and bone crack." I know all about it, my minstrel boy! for have I not, in my day, given and taken, and shouldered back again when I have been shouldered? Pray, do not finger your eyes any longer! Screw your lyre up to concert pitch, and go on with your stridulous performances! Neither you nor I know how bad may be the taste

of our grandchildren, or how high you may stand when they have

"Made prostitute and profligate the Muse."

If you cannot be a poet, be a poetaster; and if you cannot be that, be a poetess, or "she-poet," as Johnson, in his big dictionary, defines the word. So "gently take all that ungently comes," and hammer away as sedulously as old Boileau. Somebody will, undoubtedly, in the next age, relish your rinsings. A poet, you know, is a prophet. Console yourself by vaticinating in the bower of your bed-chamber, as you count the feet upon your fingers, your own immortality. If 'tis a delusion, 'tis a cheap one, to which even a poet can afford to treat himself. Play with and humor your life, till you fall asleep, and then the care will be over! Meanwhile, you must be more stupid than I think, if you cannot find somebody to give you your fodder of flattery. You need not blush, for I know that you like it, and you need not be ashamed of liking it. We all do,—we are all women in that regard; although the honestest man to confess it that I ever heard of was Sir Godfrey Kneller, who said to Pope, when he was painting his picture, "I can't do so well as I should do, unless you flatter me a little; pray, flatter me, Mr. Pope! You know I love to be flattered."

You see, my excellent Robert, that, by some hocus-pocus which I do not exactly comprehend, myself, I have introduced a wheel within a wheel, a letter within a letter, a play within a play,

after the manner of the old dramatists; and I beg you to make a note that the foregoing admonitions and most sapient counsels are not addressed to you. You are something of a philosopher; but you are not, like Mr. Stephen Duck, "something of a philosopher *and* something of a poet"; for I do not believe, O fortunate youth, that you ever invoked the ten ladies *minus* one in your life; and I shrewdly suspect, that, so far from knowing the difference between a male and a female rhyme, you are unfamiliar with the close family connection between "trees" and "breeze," or between "love" and "dove." My episodical remarks are for the benefit of young Dolce Pianissimo, who has taken, I am sorry to say, to gin, shirt-collars prodigious, and the minor magazines, and whose friends are standing aghast and despairing at his lunacy. But, after all, 'tis my best irony quite thrown away; for the foolish boy will believe me quite in earnest, and will still be making love to that jade, Mistress Fame, although he knows well enough how many she has jilted. But as he grows in stature, he may grow in sense. If you see him very savagely cut up in "The Revolver," you will recognize the kindly hands which held the bistoury, scalpel, and tenaculum, and the gentleman who wept while he wounded.

But I have long enough, I fear too long, tormented you with my drivel. It must be your consolation, that, in spirit, you have been with me to-night, as I have thought of the old days, pausing for a moment over these mute but eloquent companions, to dream or to sigh, and then once more turning the old familiar pages as

I try to forget, for just a little while, that dear familiar face. If something of indifference has tinctured these hurried lines, if I have been unjust in my estimate of the world's honors and the rewards of the Muses, you will forgive me, if you will remember how the great Burke reduced the value of earthly honors and emoluments to less than that of a peck of wheat. My fire is gone out. My candle is flickering in the socket. There is light in the cold, gray East. Good-morning, Don Bob!—good-morning!

AFTER THE BALL

They sat and combed their beautiful hair,
Their long, bright tresses, one by one,
As they laughed and talked in the chamber there,
After the revel was done.

Idly they talked of waltz and quadrille,
Idly they laughed, like other girls,
Who over the fire, when all is still,
Comb out their braids and curls.

Robe of satin and Brussels lace,
Knots of flowers and ribbons, too,
Scattered about in every place,
For the revel is through.

And Maud and Madge in robes of white,
The prettiest night-gowns under the sun,
Stockingless, slipperless, sit in the night,
For the revel is done,—

Sit and comb their beautiful hair,
Those wonderful waves of brown and gold,
Till the fire is out in the chamber there,
And the little bare feet are cold.

Then out of the gathering winter chill,
All out of the bitter St. Agnes weather,
While the fire is out and the house is still,
Maud and Madge together,—

Maud and Madge in robes of white,
The prettiest night-gowns under the sun,
Curtained away from the chilly night,
After the revel is done,—

Float along in a splendid dream,
To a golden gittern's tinkling tune,
While a thousand lustres shimmering stream,
In a palace's grand saloon.

Flashing of jewels, and flutter of laces,
Tropical odors sweeter than musk,
Men and women with beautiful faces
And eyes of tropical dusk,—

And one face shining out like a star,
One face haunting the dreams of each,
And one voice, sweeter than others are,
Breaking into silvery speech,—

Telling, through lips of bearded bloom,
An old, old story over again,
As down the royal bannered room,

To the golden gittern's strain,

Two and two, they dreamily walk,
While an unseen spirit walks beside,
And, all unheard in the lovers' talk,
He claimeth one for a bride.

Oh, Maud and Madge, dream on together,
With never a pang of jealous fear!
For, ere the bitter St. Agnes weather
Shall whiten another year,

Robed for the bridal, and robed for the tomb,
Braided brown hair, and golden tress,
There'll be only one of you left for the bloom
Of the bearded lips to press,—

Only one for the bridal pearls,
The robe of satin and Brussels lace,—
Only one to blush through her curls
At the sight of a lover's face.

Oh, beautiful Madge, in your bridal white,
For you the revel has just begun;
But for her who sleeps in your arms to-night
The revel of Life is done!

But robed and crowned with your saintly bliss,
Queen of heaven and bride of the sun,

Oh, beautiful Maud, you'll never miss
The kisses another hath won!

ROCK, TREE, AND MAN

It is an interesting thought, that will occur to a contemplative mind, that the world contained, from the time when it was a nebulous mass, all the materials of the future individuals of the animate and inanimate creation,—that the elaborate creatures of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, as well as every mineral, were floating in amorphous masses through space. Human beings, like genius that was condensed from vapor at the rubbing of Aladdin's lamp, were diffused in gases, waiting the touch of the Great Magician's wand to bring them into form and infuse them with life. In all the distinct creations of God, from the time when the waters first subsided and the dry land appeared, in everything organized and inorganized, earth, air, sea, and their inhabitants, there is no element which was not in existence when the earth was without form and void.

Philosophers tell us that three hundred and fifty millions of years elapsed after the globe began to solidify, before it was fitted for the lowest plants. And more than one million years more were necessary, after the first plants began to grow upon its young surface, to bring it forward to the condition which the Divine Father deemed suitable for the reception of man. If the days of Cain and Abel were the infancy of the world,—as we have sometimes heard,—when will it come to maturity? Its divisions of life cannot follow the plan of animated beings; for, with an

embryonic condition of an indefinite period, and an infancy of three hundred and fifty millions of years, more or less, we can hardly expect that it will really have begun to enjoy the freedom of adult life, before the human race will have attained to its earthly limit of perfectibility, or have so overstocked the surface of the globe as to make it necessary to remove to some larger sphere.

It is curious, we say, to think that everything now on the earth or composing its substance was present, though in far different form, at the beginning,—that the Almighty gathered together in this part of the universe all the materials out of which to create all the forms of things which it was his pleasure to evolve here through all time,—that in that nebulous mass were revolving, not only the gases which were at last to combine in various manners and proportions to form the rocky crust and the watery investment of the earth, but that in that dense and noisome cloud floated also the elements of all the beautiful objects that furnish the daily enchantments of life. Flowers and trees, birds and fishes, locusts and mastodons, all things, from the tiniest animalcule to man, were there, unmodelled, not even in embryo, —their separate existences then only in the mind of God. There, Christian and Saracen, Jew and Gentile, Caucasian and Negro, Hindoo and Pariah, all the now heterogeneous natures which are as oil and water, were blended in one common vapor.

Finally the condensation of all the gaseous elements began, and the aëriform masses became liquid, and the waters,—what

mineral waters they were, when they were saturated with granite and marble, diamonds, rubies, arsenic, and iron!—thus deposited by the vapor, left a gas above them light enough to bear some faint resemblance to our air. Still this atmosphere was surcharged with vapors which no lungs could tolerate, whether of man or reptile; and other steps must be taken to clear it of its unwholesome properties. Then did the Almighty will introduce, one after another, the germs of plants,—first of all, the lower orders, the ferns, which seek the shade, and the lichens, which grow in damp and dark recesses, mosses, which cling to bare rocks, living almost on air and water alone,—everything which needed not bright sunlight to invigorate it nor soil to cling to. Year by year and age by age did these humble plants extract their nourishment from the murky vapors that shrouded the earth, and, after fashioning those gases into a living tissue of stems and leaves, year after year did they die and lay their remains upon the rocks, accumulating by slow steps a soil which would in time be capable of giving holding-ground to mightier plants. The trees came,—and gigantic they must have been; and every species of tree, shrub, and herb now upon the earth, and of all animals that walk, fly, or swim, was introduced before the creation of man.

It was as if the elements were too gross for the constitution of man, when they were first collected from the nebulous mass,—as if they needed to go through the intermediate forms of plants and animals, passing in succession from one to another, before they could be permitted to enter into the bodies of those beings

who were to be in God's likeness. But, in very truth, the elements were unaltered by their many transmigrations. It was the divine act of God which caused every plant to spring forth and gave birth to every living thing. Every seed and every egg was at the first formed by Him. No sudden effort of man's will, such as that by which Pygmalion was believed to have animated the work of his chisel, nor any industrious current of electricity, passed for uninterrupted weeks through the purest gum, and stimulated by the enthusiasm of a Cross, can transform the worm to a breathing being, or reach the human climax by slow steps, even if the first one be in the humble form of a louse. When a new plant appeared, it was the hand of God that formed the seed. When a new species of animal came upon the earth, it was the same Power that created it. But the materials were not new; "out of the dust of the earth" was man created.

Oxygen, Hydrogen, Carbon, and Nitrogen,—do not turn away from us, gentle reader, we will not be grimly scientific, but a few of the terms of science must be employed, even here,—these four elements are the chief ingredients of all vegetable and animal structures. When separated from their connections, three of them are gases; and the fourth, in union with one of the others, is also a gas. In various combinations they form literally the dust of the earth, they make rock and water, vapor and air. In the hand of the Almighty, they are so many plastic elements, that form now a plant of the lowliest condition, now a magnificent oak, now a fish, and now a man. And the germ of each organized

being bequeathes to its offspring the power to reproduce its likeness,—so that each succeeding generation is a repetition of its predecessor. There is no change in plants and animals from the first; the same materials in the same proportions that were selected by the earliest trees for their composition are chosen now; and in form and function the last animal is a precise copy of the first of his race.

If we attempt to trace a particle of matter, we shall find its wanderings endless. Annihilation is a term which is not applicable to material things. Matter is never destroyed; it rarely rests. Oxygen, for instance, the most important constituent of our atmosphere, is the combining element of all things, the medium of communication between the kingdoms of Nature, the agent of the interchanges that are continually taking place among all created things. Oxygen keeps life in man, by combining with his blood at every inhalation; it is absorbed by flowers, to be employed in the perfection of the fruit; many minerals are incapable of the various uses of society, until oxygen has attacked and united with them. It gives us lime and soda, the oil of vitriol, and common salt; the mineral pigments in common use are impossible without it; and the beautiful colors of our autumn leaves are due to the combination of oxygen with their juices. It enters into all plans and operations with a helping hand; animals and plants owe their lives to it; but when the shadow of death begins to fall upon them, it is as ready to aid in their destruction. Like calumny, which blackens whatsoever

is suspected, oxygen pounces upon the failing and completes their ruin. The processes of fermentation and putrefaction cannot commence in any substance, until it has first taken oxygen into combination. Thus, cans of meat, hermetically sealed, with all the air first carefully expelled, undergo no change so long as the air does not get access to them. If the minutest opening remain, the oxygen of the atmosphere combines with the contents of the can, and fermentation or putrefaction follows. Rust, which takes the keen edge from the knife, is only another name for oxydation: keep the knife bright, and no oxygen dares touch it; but the slightest blemish is made a loophole for the entrance of the ever-watchful enemy, who never again leaves it until its destruction is complete.

All the elements have a great love of society; they cannot live alone; they have their likes and their dislikes; they contract alliances which endure for a time, but are dissolved in favor of stronger attractions.

We have mentioned the names of several natural elements. Let us see what they are, and what they have to do with man and the kingdoms of Nature. Beginning with man, let us see what becomes of him in course of time, what physical metamorphoses he undergoes, to what vile but excellent uses he is put.

That which forms the bone and muscle of a man this year may be upon his own table in the shape of potatoes or peaches one summer later. When Hamlet talked of turning the clay of Alexander into the bung of a beer-barrel, he spoke the simple

truth. In that great play, Shakspeare appears to have had the transformations of material things much in his mind; for we find him alluding, in several passages, to the reciprocity which subsists between the elements of animate and inanimate things, and between the different members of the same kingdom;—as when, in conversation with the king about the dead Polonius, he makes Hamlet say, "A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat the fish that hath fed of the worm"; or where, over the grave of Ophelia, he traces the two ancient heroes back to their mother earth, in words some of which we have quoted.

The ancient mythology, which shadowed forth some truth in all its fables, turned these facts of Nature to its purpose. The gods of Greece, when they saw fit to remove a human being from life, sometimes reproduced him in another form of beauty, without any intermediate stages of decay. Apollo seemed to have a particular fancy for planting the boys and girls whom he had loved where he might enjoy their fragrant society. Thus, a boy named Cyparissus, who had the misfortune to kill a favorite deer, was so unwilling to be consoled, that he besought Apollo to make his mourning perpetual; and the kind god changed him into a cypress, which is still a funereal tree. The modest virgin Daphne, who succeeded in escaping the violence of his passion, was transformed into a laurel, which is ever green and pure. And the sweet youth Hyacinthus, beloved of Apollo, being accidentally killed by a quoit which the god of day was throwing, that divinity, in his grief, caused those sweet flowers which bear his name

to spring from his blood, where it fell upon the ground. It is only in the annihilation of the intervals of time between different forms of existence that these old metamorphoses, which Ovid relates, are fabulous. If our readers will bear us company a few steps, through ways which shall have diversions enough to forbid weariness, we will endeavor to satisfy them that these apparent fables are very near to every-day truths. We must begin with some plain statements.

The air which we expel from the lungs at every breath has a large proportion of carbonic acid. Let a man be shut up in an air-tight room for a day, and he will have changed nearly all the oxygen in it into this carbonic acid, and rendered it unfit for animal life. Dogs, cats, and birds would die in it. But, poisonous as it is to man and other animals, it is a feast to plants. They want it all day and every day; not in the night,—at that time they have a taste for oxygen. This effete air, which men and animals exhale, so charged with carbonic acid, the plants drink in through every pore. They take it from the mouth of man, appropriate it to their daily uses, and in time render it back to him mingled with other ingredients in wholesome fruit. Carbonic acid is death when it combines with the blood,—as it does when we inhale it; but not so when it enters the stomach in small quantities. One inspiration of it is enough to make us dizzy,—as when we enter an old well or stoop over a charcoal fire; but a draught of water fully charged with it is exhilarating and refreshing, as we know by repeated experiences at marble fountains that meet us on so many city-

corners.

If plants had souls, they would be pure ones, since they can bear such contamination and not be harmed,—nay, since even from such foul food as we give them they can evolve results so beautiful. We give them our cast-off and worn-out materials, and they return us the most beautiful flowers and the most luscious fruits.

Beside carbonic acid, there are two other principal materials, which are every day passing off in an effete state, though capable of being transferred to the uses of plants. But when an animal dies, the whole substance is then at Nature's disposal. We must set aside a great deal of it for the ants and flies, who will help themselves in spite of us. If any one has never seen a carcass rapidly disappearing under the steady operations of the larvae of the flesh-fly, he has yet to learn why some flies were made. The ants, too, carry it off in loads larger, if not heavier, than themselves. But carcasses of animals may go to decay, undisturbed by the ravages of these useful insects. That is, the limited partnership of Oxygen, Hydrogen, & Co., under which they agreed to carry on the operations of sheep, fox, or fish, having terminated by the death of the animal, the partners make immediate use of their liberty and go off in inorganic form in search of new engagements, leaving sulphur, phosphorus, and the other subordinate elements of the animal, to shift for themselves. They were in the employ of a sheep; they will now carry on a man or an oak-tree, a colony of insects, or something else. Under

the form of carbonate of ammonia, the four elements diffuse themselves through the air, or are absorbed by the earth, and offer themselves at once to the roots and leaves of the trees, as ready to go on with their vivifying operations as they were in behalf of the animals. There are some plants which seem not to be left to the chances of securing their nourishment from the carbonate of ammonia that the air and the soil contain, but are contrived so as to entrap living animals and hold them fast while they undergo decomposition, so that all their gases may be absorbed by them alone. Thus, "the little Sundew exudes a gluey secretion from the surface of its leaves, which serves to attract and retain insects, the decay of whose bodies seems to contribute to its existence." And the Dionaea, or Venus's Fly-trap of the Southern States, has some leaves which fold together upon any insect that alights upon their upper surface; and by means of a row of long spines that fringes the leaves, they prevent his escape. The more active the struggles of the captive, the closer grows the hold of the leaf, and speedily destroys him. The plant appears to derive nutriment from the decomposition of its victims. "Plants of this kind, which have been kept in hot-houses in England, from which insects were carefully excluded, have been observed to languish, but were restored by placing little bits of meat upon their traps,—the decay of these seeming to answer the same purpose."

The four elements already referred to are by no means all the material ingredients of animal bodies. There are, also, phosphorus, lime, magnesia, soda, sulphur, chlorine, and iron;

and if you believe some chemists, there is hardly a mineral in common use that may not be found in the human body. We doubt, however, whether lead, arsenic, and silver are there, without the intervention of the doctor.

What becomes of the phosphorus and the rest, when an animal dies? Oh, they take up new business, too. They are as indispensable to the animal frame as the four most prominent ingredients. We eat a great deal of bread and meat, and a little salt,—but the little salt is as important to continued life as the large bread. There is hardly a tissue in the body from which phosphorus, in combination with lime, is absent; so that the composition of lucifer-matches is by no means the most important use of this element. The luminous appearance which some putrefying substances, particularly fish, present at night, is due to the slow combustion of phosphorus which takes place as this element escapes into the air from the decomposing tissues.

The necessity for the steady supply of phosphorus and lime to the body is the cause of the popularity of Mapes's superphosphate of lime as a manure. The farmers who buy it, perhaps, do not know that their bones and other parts are made of it, and that this is the reason they must furnish it to their land; for between the land and the farmer's bones are two or three other factories that require the same material. All the farmer knows is, that his grass and his corn grow better for the superphosphate. But what he has not thought of we will tell you,—that man finds his phosphate of lime in the milk and meat of the cow, and she

finds her supply in the grass and corn, which look to the farmer to see that their stock of this useful mineral compound does not fall short. Thus in milk and meat and corn, which constitute so large a part of our diet, we have always our phosphate of lime. There are many other sources whence we can derive it, but these will do for the present. And thus, when an animal dies and has no further use for his phosphate of lime, it is washed into the soil around, after decomposition of the body has set it free, and goes to make new grass and corn. Bone-earth (pounded bones) is a common top-dressing for grass-lands.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.