

and thickness. It is a great deal easier to say this than to prove it, and a great deal easier to dispute it than disprove it. But mind this, the more we observe and study, the wider we find the range of the automatic and instinctive principles in body, mind and morals, and the narrower the limits of the self-determining conscious movement.

I have often seen piano-forte players and singers make such strange motions over their instruments or song-books that I wanted to laugh at them. "Where did our friends pick up all these fine ecstatic airs?" I would say to myself. Then I would remember My Lady in "Marriage à la Mode," and amuse myself with thinking how affectation was the same thing in Hogarth's time and in our own. But one day I bought me a Canary-bird and hung him up in a cage at my window. By-and-by he found himself at home, and began to pipe his little tunes; and there he was, sure enough, swimming and waving about, with all the droopings and liftings and languishing side-turnings of the head that I had laughed at. And now I should like to ask, *Who* taught him all this?—and me, through him, that the foolish head was not the one swinging itself from side to side and bowing and nodding over the music, but that other which was passing its shallow and self-satisfied judgment on a creature made of finer clay than the frame which carried that same head upon its shoulders?

Do you want an image of the human will, or the self-determining principle, as compared with its prearranged and impassable restrictions?

A drop of water, imprisoned in a crystal; you may see such a one in any mineralogical collection. One little fluid particle in the crystalline prism of the solid universe!

Weaken moral obligations? No, not weaken, but define them. When I preach that sermon I spoke of the other day I shall have to lay down some principles not fully recognized in some of your text-books.

I should have to begin with one most formidable preliminary. You saw an article the other day in one of the journals, perhaps, in which some old doctor or other said quietly that patients were very apt to be fools and cowards. But a great many of the clergyman's patients are not only fools and cowards, but also liars.

[Immense sensation at the table,—sudden retirement of the angular female in oxydated bombazine. Movement of adhesion—as they say in the Chamber of Deputies—on the part of the young fellow they call John. Falling of the old-gentleman-opposite's lower jaw—(gravitation is beginning to get the better of him.) Our landlady to Benjamin Franklin, briskly,—Go to school right off, there's a good boy! School-mistress curious, takes a quick glance at divinity-student. Divinity student slightly flushed; draws his shoulders back a little, as if a big falsehood—or truth—had hit him in the forehead. Myself calm.]

I should not make such a speech as that, you know, without having pretty substantial indorsers to fall back upon, in case my credit should be disputed. Will you run upstairs, Benjamin Franklin (for B. F. had *not* gone right off, of

course,) and bring down a small volume from the left upper corner of the right-hand shelves.

[Look at the precious, little black ribbed-back, clean-typed, vellum-papered 32mo. "*Desiderii Erasmi Colloquia. Amstelodami. Typis Ludovici Elzevirii, 1650.*" Various names written on title-page. Most conspicuous this; Gul. Cookeson: E. Coll. Omn. Anim. 1725. Oxon.

O! William Cookeson, of All-Souls College, Oxford,—then writing as I now write—now in the dust, where I shall lie,—is this line all that remains to thee of earthly remembrance. Thy name is at least once more spoken by living men;—is it a pleasure to thee? Thou shalt share with me my little draught of immorality,—its week, its month, its year,—whatever it may be,—and then we will go together into the solemn archives of Oblivion's Uncatalogued Library.]

If you think I have used rather strong language, I shall have to read something to you out of the book of this keen and witty scholar, the great Erasmus, who "laid the egg of Reformation which Luther hatched." Oh, you never read his *Naufragium*, or "Shipwreck," did you? Of course not; for, if you had, I don't think you would have given me credit or discredit—for entire originality in that speech of mine. That men are cowards in the contemplation of futurity be illustrated by the extraordinary antics of many on board the sinking vessel; that they are fools, by their praying to the sea, and making promises to bits of wood from the true cross, and all the manner of similar nonsense; that they are fools, cowards, and liars all at once, by this story: I will put it into rough English

for you.—"I couldn't help laughing to hear one fellow bawling out, so that he might be sure to be heard, a promise to Saint Christopher of Paris—the monstrous statue in the great church there—that he would give him a wax taper as big as himself. 'Mind what you promise!' said an acquaintance that stood near him, poking him with his elbow; 'you wouldn't pay for it, if you sold all your things at auction.' 'Hold your tongue, you donkey!' said the fellow, but softly, so that Saint Christopher should not hear him.—'do you think I'm in earnest? If I once get my foot on dry ground, catch me giving him so much as a tallow candle!'

Now, therefore, remembering that those who have been loudest in their talk about the great subject of which we were speaking have not necessarily been wise, brave, and true men, but, on the contrary, have very often been wanting on one or two or all of the qualities these words imply, I should expect to find a good many doctrines current in the schools which I should be obliged to call foolish, cowardly and false.

So you would abuse other people's beliefs, sir, and yet not tell us your own creed!—said the divinity student, coloring up with a spirit for which I liked him all the better.

I have a creed, I replied; none better, and none shorter. It is told in two words,—the two first of the Paternoster. And when I say these words I mean them. And when I compared the human will to a drop in a crystal, and said I meant to *define* moral obligations, and not weaken them, this was what I intended to express; that the fluent, self-determining power of human

beings is a very strictly limited agency in the universe. The chief planes of its enclosing solid are, of course, organization, education, condition. Organization may reduce the power of the will to nothing, as in some idiots; and from this zero the scale mounts upwards by slight graduations. Education is only second to nature. Imagine all the infants born this year in Boston and Timbuctoo to change places. Condition does less, but "Give me neither poverty nor riches," was the prayer of Agur, and with good reason. If there is any improvement in modern theology, it is in getting out of the region of pure abstractions and taking these every-day working forces into account. The great theological question now heaving and throbbing in the minds of Christian men in this:

No, I wont talk about these things now. My remarks might be repeated, and it would give my friends pain to see with what personal incivilities I should be visited. Besides, what business has a mere boarder to be talking about such things at a breakfast-table? Let him make puns. To be sure, he was brought up among the Christian fathers, and learned his alphabet out of a quarto "Concilium Tridentinum." He has also heard many thousand theological lectures by men of various denominations; and it is not at all to the credit of these teachers, if he is not fit by this time to express an opinion on theological matters.

I know well enough that there are some of you who had a great deal rather see me stand on my head than use it for any purpose of thought! Does not my friend, the Professor,

receive at least two letters a week, requesting him to....., —on the strength of some youthful antics of his, which, no doubt, authorizes the intelligent constituency of autograph-hunters to address him as a harlequin?

Weil, I can't be savage with you for wanting to laugh, and I like to make you laugh, well enough, when I can. But then observe this; if the sense of the ridiculous is one side of an impressible nature, it is very well, but if that is all there is in a man, he had better have been an ape at once, and so have stood at the head of the profession. Laughter and tears are meant to turn the wheels of the same machinery of sensibility; one is wind-power, and the other water-power; that is all. I have often heard the Professor talk about hysterics as being Nature's cleverest illustration of the reciprocal convertibility of the two states of which these acts are the manifestations; but you may see it every day in children; and if you want to choke with stifled tears at sight of the transition, as it shows itself in older years, go and see Mr. Blake play *Jesse Rural*.

It is a very dangerous thing for a litterry man to indulge his love for the ridiculous. People laugh *with* him just so long as he amuses them; but if he attempts to be serious, they must still have their laugh, and so they laugh *at* him. There is in addition, however, a deeper reason for this than would at first appear. Do you know that you feel a little superior to every man who makes you laugh, whether by making faces or verses? Are you aware that you have a pleasant tense of patronizing him, when you con-

descend so far as to let him turn somersets, literal or literary, for your royal delight. Now if a man can only be allowed to stand on a dias, or raised platform, and look down on his neighbor who is exerting his talent for him, oh, it is all right!—first-rate performance!—and all the rest of the fine phrases. But if all at once the performance asks the gentleman to come upon the floor, and, stepping upon the platform, begins to talk down at him,—ah, that wasn't in the programme!

I have never forgotten what happened when Sydney Smith—who, as everybody knows, was an exceedingly sensible man, and a gentleman, every inch of him—venture to preach a sermon on the Duties of Royalty. The "Quarterly," "so savage and tartarly," came down upon him in the most contemptuous style, as "a joker of jokes," a "diner-out of the first water," in one of his own phrases; sneering at him, insulting him, as nothing but a toady of a court, sneaking behind the anonymous, would ever have been mean enough to do a man of his position and genius, or to any decent person even. If I were giving advice to a young fellow of talent, with two or three facets to his mind, I would tell him by all means to keep his wit in the background until after he had made a reputation by his more solid qualities. And so to an actor: *Hamlet* first, and *Bob Logic* afterwards, if you like; but don't think, as they say poor Liston used to, that people will be ready to allow that you can do anything great with *Macbeth's* dagger after flourishing about with *Paul Pry's* umbrella. Do you know, too, that

the majority of men look upon all who challenge their attention,—for a while, at least,—as beggars and nuisances? They always try to get off as cheaply as they can; and the cheapest of all things they can give a literary man—pardon the forlorn pleasantry—is the *funny-bone*. That is all very well so far as it goes, but satisfies no man, and makes a good many angry, as I told you on a former occasion.

Oh, indeed, no! I am not ashamed to make you laugh, occasionally. I think I could read you something I have in my desk that would probably make you smile. Perhaps I will read it one of these days, if you are patient with me when I am sentimental and reflective; not just now. The ludicrous has its place in the universe; it is not a human invention, but one of the Divine ideas, illustrated in the practical jokes of kittens and monkeys long before Aristophanes or Shakespeare. How curious it is that we always consider solemnity and the absence of all gay surprises and encounters of wits as essential to the idea of the future life of those whom we thus deprive of half their faculties and then call *blessed!* There are not a few who, even in this life, seem to be preparing themselves for that smileless eternity to which they look forward, by banishing all gayety from their hearts and all joyousness from their countenances. I meet one such in the street not unfrequently, a person of intelligence and education, but who gives me (and all that he passes) such a rayless and chilling look of recognition,—something as if he were one of Heaven's assessors, come down to "doom" every acquaint-

tance he me,—that I have sometimes begun to sneeze on the spot, and gone home with a violent cold, dating from that instant. I don't doubt he would cut his kitten's tail off, if he caught her playing with it. Please tell me who taught her to play with it?

No, no!—give me a chance to talk to you, my fellow-boarders, and you need not be afraid that I shall have any scruples about entertaining you, if I can do it, as well as giving you some of my serious thoughts, and perhaps my sadder fancies. I know nothing in English or any other literature more admirable than that sentiment of Sir Thomas Browne: "*Every man truly lives, so long as he acts his nature, or some way makes good the faculties of himself.*"

I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving. To reach the port of heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it,—but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor. There is one very sad thing in old friendships, to every mind that is really moving onward. It is this: That one cannot help using his early friends as the seaman uses the log, to mark his progress. Every now and then we throw an old schoolmate over the stern with a string of thought tied to him, and look—I am afraid with a kind of luxurious and sanctimonious compassion—to see the rate at which the string reels off, while he lies there bobbing up and down, poor fellow! and we are dashing along with the white foam and bright sparkle at our bows;—the ruffled bosom of prosperity and progress, with a spring of diamonds stuck in it!

But this is only the sentimental side of the matter; for grow we must, if we outgrow all that we love.

Don't misunderstand that metaphor of heaving the log, I beg you. It is merely a smart way of saying that we cannot avoid measuring our rate of movement by those with whom we have long been in the habit of comparing ourselves; and when they once become stationary, we can get our reckoning from them with painful accuracy. We see just what we were when they were our peers, and can strike the balance between that and whatever we may feel ourselves to be now. No doubt we may sometimes be mistaken. If we change our last simile to that very old and familiar one of a fleet leaving the harbor and sailing in company for some distant region, we can get what we want out of it. There is one of our companions;—her streamers were torn into rags before she had got into the open sea, then by and by her sails blew out of the ropes one after another, the waves swept her deck, and as night came on we left her a seeming wreck, as we flew under our pyramid of canvas. But lo! at dawn she is still in sight,—it may be in advance of us. Some deep ocean-current has been moving her on, strong, but silent,—yes, stronger than these noisy winds that puff our sails until they are swollen as the cheeks of jubilant cherubim. And when at last the black steam tug with the skeleton arms, that comes out of the mist sooner or later and takes us all in tow, grapples her and goes off panting and groaning with her, it is to that harbor where all wrecks are refitted, and where, alas! we, towering in our pride, may never come.

So you will not think I mean to speak lightly of old friendships, because we cannot help in stituting comparisons between our present and former selves by the aid of those who were what we are, nothing strikes me more, in the race of life, than to see how many give out in the first half of the course. "Commencement day" always reminds me of the start for the "Derby," when the beautiful high-bred three-year olds of the season are brought up for trial. That day is the start, and life is the race. Here we are at Cambridge, and a class is just "graduating." Poor Harry! he was to have been there too, but he has paid forfeit; step out here into the grass back of the church; ah! there it is:

*"Hunc lapidem posuerunt
Soch Moerentes."*

But this is the start, and here they are,—coats bright as silk, and manes as smooth as *cau lus-trale* can make them. Some of the best of the colts are pranced round, a few minutes each, to show their paces. What is that old gentleman crying about? and the old lady by him, and the three girls, all covering their eyes for? Oh, that is *their* colt that has just been trotted up on the stage. Do they really think those little thin legs can do anything in such a slashing sweepstakes as is coming off in the next forty years? Oh, this terrible gift of second-sight that comes to some of us when we begin to look through the silvered rings of the *arcus senilis*.

Ten years gone. First turn in the race. A few broken down; two or three bolted. Several

show in advance of the ruck. *Cassock*, a black colt, seems to be ahead of the rest; those black colts commonly get the start, I have noticed, of the others, in the first quarter. *Meteor* has pulled up.

Twenty years. Second corner turned. *Cassock* has dropped from the front, and *Judex*, an iron-gray, has the lead. But look! how they have thinned out? Down flat,—five,—six,—how many? They lie still enough! they will not get up again in this race, be very sure! And the rest of them, what a "tailing off"! Anybody can see who is going to win,—perhaps.

Thirty years. Third corner turned. *Dives*, bright sorrel, ridden by the fellow in a yellow jacket, begins to make play fast; is getting to be the favorite with many. But who is that other one that has been lengthening his stride from the first, and now shows close up to the front? Don't you remember the quiet brown colt *Asteroid*, with the star in his forehead? That is he; he is one of the sort that lasts; look out for him! The black "colt," as we used to call him, is in the background, taking it easy in a gentle trot. There is one they used to call the *Filly*, on account of a certain feminine air he had; well up, you see; the *Filly* is not to be despised, my boy!

Forty years. More dropping off,—but places much as before.

Fifty years. Race over. All that are on the course are coming in at a walk; no more running. Who is ahead? Ahead? What! and the winning-post a slab of white or gray stone standing out from that turf where there is no