"Country," but simply "Duty!" How few are the nations willing to rally to such a battle-cry!

Shortly after the wreck of the *Birkenhead* off the coast of Africa, in which the officers and men went down firing a *feu-de-joie*, after seeing the women and children safely embarked in the boats, Robertson, of Brighton, referring to the circumstance in one of his letters, said: "Yes! Goodness, Duty, Sacrifice—these are the qualities that England honors. She gapes and wonders every now and then, like an awkward peasant, at some other things—railway kings, electro-biology, and other trumperies; but nothing stirs her grand old heart down to its central deeps universally and long except the Right. She puts on her shawl very badly, and she is awkward enough in a concert-room, scarce knowing a Swedish nightingale from a jackdaw; but—blessings large and long upon her!—she knows how to teach her sons to sink like men amidst sharks and billows, without parade, without display, as if Duty were the most natural thing in the world; and she never mistakes long an actor for a hero, or a hero for an actor.*

It is a grand thing, after all, this pervading spirit of Duty in a nation; and so long as it survives, no one need despair of its future. But when it has departed, or become deadened, and been supplanted by thirst for pleasure, or selfish aggrandizement, or "glory"—then woe to that nation, for its dissolution is near at hand!

If there be one point on which intelligent observers are agreed more than another as to the cause of the late deplorable collapse of France as a nation, it was the utter absence of this feeling of duty, as well as of truthfulness, from the

* Robertson's "Life and Letters," ii., 157.

mind, not only of the men, but of the leaders of the French people. The unprejudiced testimony of Colonel Stoffel, French military attache at Berlin before the war, is conclusive on this point. In his private report to the emperor, found at the Tuileries, which was written in August, 1869, about a year before the outbreak of the war, Colonel Stoffel pointed out that the highly-educated and disciplined German people were pervaded by an ardent sense of duty, and did not think it beneath them to reverence sincerely what was noble and lofty; whereas, in all respects, France presented a melancholy contrast. There the people, having sneered at everything, had lost the faculty of respecting anything, and virtue, family life, patriotism, honor, and religion, were represented to a frivolous generation as only fitting subjects for ridicule.* Alas! how terribly has France been

* We select the following passages from this remarkable report of Colonel Stoffel, as being of more than merely temporary interest:

"Who that has lived here (Berlin) will deny that the Prussians are energetic, patriotic, and teeming with youthful vigor; that they are not corrupted by sensual pleasures, but are manly, have earnest convictions, do not think it beneath them to reverence sincerely what is noble and lofty? What a melancholy contrast does France offer in all this! Having sneered at everything, she has lost the faculty of respecting anything. Virtue, family life, patriotism, honor, religion, are represented to a frivolous generation as fitting subjects of ridicule. The theatres have become schools of shamelessness and obscenity. Drop by drop poison is instilled into the very core of an ignorant and enervated society, which has neither the insight nor the energy left to amend its institutions, nor—which would be the most necessary step to take—become better informed or more moral. One after the other the fine qualities of the nation are dying out. Where is the generosity, the loyalty, the charm of our *esprit*, and our former elevation of soul? If this goes on, the time will come when this noble race of France will be known only by its faults. And France has no idea

punished for her sins against truth and duty! Yet the time was when France possessed many great men inspired by duty; but they were all men of a comparatively remote past. The race of Bayard, Duguesclin, Coligny, Duquesne, Turenne, Colbert, and Sully seems to have died out and left no lineage. There has been an occasional great Frenchman of modern times who has raised the cry of Duty, but his voice has been as that of one crying in the wilderness. De Tocqueville was one of such; but, like all men of his stamp, he was proscribed, imprisoned, and driven from public life. Writing on one occasion to his friend Kergorlay, he said: "Like you, I become more and more alive to the happiness which consists in the fulfillment of

that, while she is sinking, more earnest nations are stealing a march upon her, are distancing her on the road to progress, and are preparing for her a secondary position in the world.

"I am afraid that these opinions will not be relished in France. However correct, they differ too much from what is usually said and asserted at home. I should wish some enlightened and unprejudiced Frenchman to come to Prussia and make this country their study. They would soon discover that they were living in the midst of a strong, earnest, and intelligent nation, entirely destitute, it is true, of noble and delicate feelings, of all fascinating charms, but endowed with every solid virtue, and alike distinguished for untiring industry, order. and economy, as well as for patriotism, a strong sense of duty, and that consciousness of personal dignity which in their case is so happily blended with respect for authority and obedience to the law. They would see a country with firm, sound, and moral institutions, whose upper classes are worthy of their rank, and, by possessing the highest degree of culture, devoting themselves to the service of the State, setting an example of patriotism, and knowing how to preserve the influence legitimately their own. They would find a State with an excellent administration, where everything is in its right place, and where the most admirable order prevails in every branch of the

Duty. I believe there is no other so deep and so real. There is only one great object in the world which deserves our efforts, and that is the good of mankind."*

social and political system. Prussia may be well compared to a massive structure of lofty proportions and astounding solidity, which, though it has nothing to delight the eye or speak to the heart, cannot but impress us with its grand symmetry, equally observable in its broad foundations as in its strong and sheltering roof.

"And what is France? What is French society in these latter days? A hurly-burly of disorderly elements, all mixed and jumbled together; a country in which everybody claims the right to occupy the highest posts, yet few remember that a man to be employed in a responsible position ought to have a well-balanced mind, ought to be strictly moral, to know something of the world, and possess certain intellectual powers; a country in which the highest offices are frequently held by ignorant and uneducated persons, who either boast some special talent, or whose only claim is social position and some versatility and address. What a baneful and degrading state of things! And how natural that, while it lasts, France should be full of a people without a position, without a calling, who do not know what to do with themselves, but are none the less eager to envy and malign every one who does. . . .

"The French do not possess in any very marked degree the qualities required to render general conscription acceptable, or to turn it to account. Conceited and egotistic as they are, the people would object to an innovation whose invigorating force they are unable to comprehend, and which cannot be carried out without virtues which they do not possess—self-abnegation, conscientious recognition of duty, and a willingness to sacrifice personal interests to the loftier demands of the country. As the character of individuals is only improved by experience, most nations require a chastisement before they set about reorganizing their political institutions. So Prussia wanted a Jena to make her the strong and healthy country she is."

* Yet even in De Tocqueville's benevolent nature there was a pervading element of impatience. In the very letter in which the above passage occurs, he says: "Some persons try to be of use to men

Although France has been the unquiet spirit among the nations of Europe since the reign of Louis XIV., there have from time to time been honest and faithful men who have lifted up their voices against the turbulent, warlike tendencies of the people, and not only preached, but endeavored to carry into practice, a gospel of peace. Of these, the Abbe de St. Pierre was one of the most courageous. He had even the boldness to denounce the wars of Louis XIV., and to deny that monarch's right to the epithet of "great," for which he was punished by expulsion from the Academy. The abbe was as enthusiastic an agitator for a system of international peace as any member of the modern Society of Friends. As Joseph Sturge went to St. Petersburg to convert the Emperor of Russia to his views, so the abbe went to Utrecht to convert the Conference sitting there, to his project for a Diet to secure perpetual peace. Of course he was regarded as an enthusiast, Cardinal Dubois characterizing his scheme as "the dream of an honest man." Yet the abbe had found his dream in the Gospel; and in what better way could he exemplify the spirit of the Master he served than by endeavoring to abate the horrors and abominations of war. The Conference was an assemblage of men representing Christian States; and the abbe merely called upon them to put in practice the doctrines

while they despise them, and others because they love them. In the services rendered by the first, there is always something incomplete, rough, and contemptuous, that inspires neither confidence nor gratitude. I should like to belong to the second class, but often I can not. I love mankind in general, but I constantly meet with individuals whose baseness revolts me. I struggle daily against a universal contempt for my fellow-creatures." *Memoirs and Remains of De Tocqueville*, vol. i., p. 313. (Letter to Kergorlay, Nov. 13th, 1833.)

they professed to believe. It was of no use: the potentates and their representatives turned to him a deaf ear.

The Abbe de St. Pierre lived several hundred years too soon. But he determined that his idea should not be lost, and in 1713 he published his "Project of Perpetual Peace." He there proposed the formation of a European Diet, or Senate, to be composed of representatives of all nations, before which princes should be bound, before resorting to arms, to state their grievances and require redress. Writing about eighty years after the publication of this project, Volney asked: "What is a people?—an individual of the society at large. What a war?—a duel between two individual people. In what manner ought a society to act when two of its members fight?—interfere, and reconcile or repress them. In the days of the Abbe de St. Pierre, this was treated as a dream; but, happily for the human race, it begins to be realized." Alas for the prediction of Volney! The twenty-five years that followed the date at which this passage was written, were distinguished by more devastating and furious wars on the part of France, than had ever been known in the world before.

The abbe was not, however, a mere dreamer. He was an active practical philanthropist, and anticipated many social improvements which have since become generally adopted. He was the original founder of industrial schools for poor children, where they not only received a good education, but learned some useful trade, by which they might earn an honest living when they grew up to manhood. He advocated the revision and simplification of the whole code of laws—an idea afterwards carried out by the First Napoleon. He wrote against duelling, against luxury, against gambling, against monasticism, quoting the remark of

Segrais, that, "the mania for a monastic life is the small-pox of the mind." He spent his whole income in acts of charity—not in alms-giving, but in helping poor children, and poor men and women, to help themselves. His object always was to benefit permanently those whom he assisted. He continued his love of truth and his freedom of speech to the last. At the age of eighty he said: "If life is a lottery for happiness, my lot has been one of the best." When on his death-bed, Voltaire asked him how he felt, to which he answered, "As about to make a journey into the country." And in this peaceful frame of mind he died. But so outspoken had St. Pierre been against corruption in high places, that Maupertius, his successor at the Academy, was not permitted to pronounce his *eloge;* nor was it until thirty-two years after his death, that this honor was done to his memory by D'Alembert. The true and emphatic epitaph of the good, truth-loving, truth-speaking abbe was this — "HE LOVED MUCH!"

Duty is closely allied to truthfulness of character; and the dutiful man is, above all things, truthful in his words as in his actions. He says, and he does the right thing in the right way, and at the right time.

There is probably no saying of Lord Chesterfield that commends itself more strongly to the approval of manly-minded men, than that it is truth that makes the success of the gentleman. Clarendon, speaking of one of the noblest and purest gentlemen of his age, says of Falkland, that he "was so severe an adorer of truth, that he could as easily have given himself leave to steal as to dissemble."

It was one of the finest things that Mrs. Hutchinson could say of her husband, that he was a thoroughly truthful and reliable man: "He never professed the thing he intended

not, nor promised what he believed out of his power, nor failed in the performance of any thing that was in his power to fulfill."

Wellington was a severe admirer of truth. An illustration may be given. When afflicted by deafness, he consulted a celebrated aurist, who, after trying all remedies in vain, determined, as a last resource, to inject into the ear a strong solution of caustic. It caused the most intense pain, but the patient bore it with his usual equanimity. The family physician accidentally calling one day, found the duke with flushed cheeks and blood shot eyes, and when he rose he staggered about like a drunken man. The doctor asked to be permitted to look at his ear, and then he found that a furious inflammation was going on, which, if not immediately checked, must shortly reach the brain and kill him. Vigorous remedies were at once applied, and the inflammation was checked. But the hearing of that ear was completely destroyed. When the aurist heard of the danger his patient had run, through the violence of the remedy he had employed, he hastened to Apsley House to express his grief and mortification; but the duke merely said: "Do not say a word more about it—you did all for the best." The aurist said it would be his ruin when it became known that he had been the cause of so much suffering and danger to his grace. "But nobody need know any thing about it: keep your own counsel, and, depend upon it, I won't say a word to any one." "Then your grace will allow me to attend you as usual, which will show the public that you have not withdrawn your confidence from me?" "No," replied the duke, kindly but firmly; "I can't do that, for that would be a lie." He would not act a falsehood any more than he would speak one.*

* Gleig's "Life of Wellington," pp. 314, 315.

Another illustration of duty and truthfulness, as exhibited in the fulfillment of a promise, may be added from the life of Blucher. When he was hastening with his army over bad roads to the help of Wellington, on the 18th of June, 1815, he encouraged his troops by words and gestures. "Forward, children—forward!" "It is impossible; it can't be done," was the answer. Again and again he urged them. "Children, we must get on; you may say it can't be done, but it *must* be done! I have promised my brother Wellington—*promised*, do you hear? You wouldn't have me *break my word!*" And it was done.

Truth is the very bond of society, without which it must cease to exist, and dissolve into anarchy and chaos. A household can not be governed by lying; nor can a nation. Sir Thomas Browne once asked, "Do the devils lie?" "No," was his answer; "for then even hell could not subsist." No considerations can justify the sacrifice of truth, which ought to be sovereign in all the relations of life.

Of all mean vices, perhaps lying is the meanest. It is in some cases the offspring of perversity and vice, and in many others of sheer moral cowardice. Yet many persons think so lightly of it that they will order their servants to lie for them; nor can they feel surprised if, after such ignoble instruction, they find their servants lying for themselves.

Sir Harry Wotton's description of an ambassador as "an honest man sent to lie abroad for the benefit of his country," though meant as a satire, brought him into disfavor with James I. when it became published; for an adversary quoted it as a principle of the king's religion. That it was not Wotton's real view of the duty of an honest man, is obvious from the lines quoted at the head of this chapter, on "The Character of a Happy Life," in which he eulogizes the man

"Whose armor is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill."

But lying assumes many forms—such as diplomacy, expediency, and moral reservation; and, under one guise or another, it is found more or less pervading all classes of society. Sometimes it assumes the form of equivocation or moral dodging—twisting and so stating the things said as to convey a false impression—a kind of lying which a Frenchman once described as "walking round about the truth."

There are even men of narrow minds and dishonest natures, who pride themselves upon their Jesuitical cleverness in equivocation, in their serpent-wise shirking of the truth and getting out of moral back-doors, in order to hide their real opinions and evade the consequences of holding and openly professing them. Institutions or systems based upon any such expedients must necessarily prove false and hollow. "Though a lie be ever so well dressed," says George Herbert, "it is ever overcome." Downright lying, though bolder and more vicious, is even less contemptible than such kind of shuffling and equivocation.

Untruthfulness exhibits itself in many other forms: in reticency on the one hand, or exaggeration on the other; in disguise or concealment; in pretended concurrence in others' opinions; in assuming an attitude of conformity which is deceptive; in making promises, or allowing them to be implied, which are never intended to be performed; or even in refraining from speaking the truth when to do so is a duty. There are also those who are all things to all men, who say one thing and do another, like Bunyan's Mr. Facing both-ways; only deceiving themselves when they think they are deceiving others—and who, being essentially insincere, fail to evoke confidence, and invariably in the end turn out failures, if not impostors.

Others are untruthful in their pretentiousness, and in assuming merits which they do not really possess. The truthful man is, on the contrary, modest, and makes no parade of himself and his deeds. When Pitt was in his last illness, the news reached England of the great deeds of Wellington in India. "The more I hear of his exploits," said Pitt, "the more I admire the modesty with which he receives the praises he merits for them. He is the only man I ever knew that was not vain of what he had done, and yet had so much reason to be so."

So it is said of Faraday by Professor Tyndall, that "pretense of all kinds, whether in life or in philosophy, was hateful to him." Dr. Marshall Hall was a man of like spirit—courageously truthful, dutiful, and manly. One of his most intimate friends has said of him that, wherever he met with untruthfulness or sinister motive, he would expose it, saying, "I neither will, nor can, give my consent to a lie." The question, "right or wrong," once decided in his own mind, the right was followed, no matter what the sacrifice or the difficulty—neither expediency nor inclination weighing one jot in the balance.

There was no virtue that Dr. Arnold labored more sedulously to instill into young men than the virtue of truthfulness, as being the manliest of virtues, as indeed the very basis of all true manliness. He designated truthfulness as "moral transparency," and he valued it more highly than any other quality. When lying was detected, he treated it as a great moral offense; but when a pupil made an assertion, he accepted it with confidence. "If you say so, that is quite enough; *of course* I believe your word." By thus trusting and believing them, he educated the young in truthfulness; the boys at length coming to say to one another: "It's a shame to tell Arnold a lie—he always believes one."*

One of the most striking instances that could be given of the character of the dutiful, truthful, laborious man, is presented in the life of the late George Wilson, professor of Technology in the University of Edinburgh.† Though we bring this illustration under the head of Duty, it might equally have stood under that of Courage, Cheerfulness, or Industry, for it is alike illustrative of these several qualities.

Wilson's life was, indeed, a marvel of cheerful laboriousness; exhibiting the power of the soul to triumph over the body, and almost to set it at defiance. It might be taken as an illustration of the saying of the whaling-captain to Dr. Kane, as to the power of moral force over physical: "Bless you, sir, the soul will any day lift the body out of its boots!"

A fragile but bright and lively boy he had scarcely entered manhood ere his constitution began to exhibit signs of disease. As early, indeed, as his seventeenth year, he began to complain of melancholy and sleeplessness, supposed to be the effects of bile. "I don't think I shall live long," he then said to a friend; my mind will—must work itself out, and the body will soon follow it." A strange confession for a boy to make! But he gave his physical health no fair chance. His life was all brain-work, study, and competition. When he took exercise it was in sudden bursts, which did him more harm than good. Long walks in the Highlands jaded and exhausted him; and he returned to his brain-work unrested and unrefreshed.

* "Life of Arnold," i., 94.

† See the "Memoir of George Wilson, M. D., F. R. S. E." By his sister (Edinburgh, 1860).