LES CLASSIQUES POUR TOUS

EMERSON

ENGLISH TRAITS

LIBRAIRIE HATIER

R. W. EMERSON

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SELECTED AND ANNOTATED

by

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R. W. EMERSON

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on the 25th of May 1803. He came of a distinguished family. His father, the Rev. William Emerson, was minister of the First (Unitarian) Church in Boston ; he died in 1811, leaving a widow and six young children with hardly any means of support. Mrs Emerson, however, proved extremely courageous and, with the efficient help of Miss Mary Emerson, her sister in-law, she managed, through strict economy and strenuous work, to bring up her large family.

When only three years old, Ralph Waldo was sent to a private school. At eleven, he entered the Latin School of his native town, where he made very satisfactory studies. In 1817, he matriculated at Harvard College (1) where he became known as a studious reader, although by no means ever gained the reputation of a « brilliant » scholar.

After taking his degree, Emerson practised schoolmastering for a few years. But he found the profession uncongenial. Moreover he was suffering from shattered health, and compelled to travel South. He gladly gave up his teaching work and, in spite of some speculative difficulties, began studying for the ministry (1823).

Three years later (i. e. in 1826), he was « approbated to preach ». He was finally ordained in March 1829 and soon after became pastor of the Second Church in Boston. Owing to some conscientious objections, he thought it fitting to resign his office in 1832. In his private diary, he wrote as follows, under date 10th Jan. 1832 : « It is the best part of the man, I sometimes think, that revolts most against his being a minister. His good revolts from official goodness. » Thus Emerson's career as a settled clergyman came to an end ; but he continued to preach as late as 1837.

A few months after his resignation, he lost his wife, « a bright revelation of the best nature of woman », who died consumptive at the early age of twenty one.

Emerson, struggling under a burden of moral distress

(1) Now one of the most famous American Universities, Harvard College was then only a sort of better class High School.

and affliction, and himself sorely sick in body, sought relief in a voyage to Europe ; he started at Christmas (1832). The sea and change wrought a beneficial influence on his health and spirits. He visited Italy, France and Great-Britain, where he successively met Coleridge, W. S. Landor, Wordsworth and Carlyle. With the last writer he struck a deep and lasting friendship.

On his return to the United States, Emerson made his first appearence as a public lecturer on literary and moral subjects. Boston was his headquarters and he settled near by in the pretty, quiet village of Concord (1834). The following year, Emerson married again and spent in his new home the rest of a long, happy, uneventful life chiefly devoted to reading, meditation, and conversations with his many friends and visitors.

In successful public lecturing, Emerson found the means of an assured livelihood. The choice of his subjects, ranging from Art to Politics, Natural philosophy, Morals, Biography, etc., was manifold and varied. In 1836, he published his set of lectures about *Nature*, which a critic describes as « an attempt to see God, and nature, and man face to face, and not merely through the eyes of tradition and history. » This book, which was received by Carlyle with « true satisfaction », may be looked upon as the apocalypse of New England Transcendentalism.

On the 31st of August 1837, Emerson delivered his well known address on « *The American Scholar* », and in the ensuing months he gradually built up and set forth his religious philosophy. « It was a plea for the individual consciousness, as against all historical creeds, bibles, churches ; for the soul as the supreme judge in spiritual matters. »

From 1840 to 1844, Emerson was a contributor to *The Dial*, the official organ of the transcendental movement in New England. Collections of his chief essays and lectures were also published in 1841 and 1844.

In 1847, after the appearance in book form of the *Poems* which he had previously contributed to *The Dial*, Emerson sailed on his second tour to Europe. He spent a whole week at Carlyle's house in London, and delivered a series of lectures on *Representative Men* (published in 1850) in England and Scotland. The volume of *English Traits* (1856) was a late outcome of this visit.

In 1857, Emerson became a contributor to *The Atlantic Monthly*, a literary magazine then recently founded by his friend James Russell Lowell. He likewise enlisted as a member of the new *Saturday Club*, the meetings of which he regularly attended until 1875, together with Lowell, Longfellow, Hawthorne, and other distinguished contemporaries.

Another well-known series of lectures on *The Conduct of Life* came out in 1860.

Two more volumes of essays, viz. *Society and Solitude* (1870), and *Letters and Social Aims* (1875), fill up the list of his chief written works.

In 1871, Emerson, now become famous, left on a visit to California. The next year his Concord house was burnt down, but his admirers soon collected money enough to build him a new one. While this was being done, the aged philosopher started on a third visit to the Old World. On his return, he was triumphantly welcomed by his own countrymen. But his intellectual faculties now began to decay : aphasia and loss of memory cast their saddening shadows over his closing years, which were but a period of restful twilight.

On the 27th of April 1882, after an affectionate parting talk with his family, R. W. Emerson peacefully died away, « falling asleep even as a little child ».

His fame entirely rests on his various essays and discourses originating in the lectures which he had delivered. As a writer, his greatest gift was his power of inspiration and stimulus ; his writings always « tend to lift the soul from earth to heaven. »

As a thinker, Emerson — who has been styled « the American Carlyle » — was an inspired seer and a prophet. He is the great popular teacher of his country, and preached eloquently against the great dangers that he saw for America in the abject worship of material wealth. His special gift was insight. He never wove the results of his investigations or meditations into one connected system. He never sought to be consistent. It has been said that he lacked that continuity of reasoning power without which no man can ever be a true philosopher. His thought often snaps and breaks off just before the great solution of the problem is attained. But he was a sincere and efficient idealist. « By his cheerful faith in man's destiny, Emerson was a splendid inspirer of America and the whole world in a century of doubt, faltering, and materialism. »

" ENGLISH TRAITS "

Though published only in 1856, the volume on *English Traits* is a reminiscence of Emerson's visit to England paid nearly ten years before that date.

Apart from personal recollections (which have been omitted here), many observations may nowadays appear antiquated, for England has changed apace in the course of the last eighty years. We have therefore left out such of Emerson's remarks as were obviously superannuated and out of date. In spite of it all, the book sets forth a great many appreciations which have remained substantially true and represent permanent features in the national temper of our English friends.

It is advisable, however, to caution the reader against accepting Emerson's views « just as they stand ». Sympathetic and broadminded as he was, he may have been biassed by personal or national prejudices, and was fallible like any of us. The book is still as stimulating as it was on the day of its publication, and we may, on the whole, accept Carlyle's favourable judgment on his friend's work :

« Not for seven years and more — he wrote on receiving *English Traits* — have I got hold of such a book — a book by a real man, with eyes in his head ; nobleness, wisdom, humour, and many other things in the heart of him. »

And even in our own days an English critic has admitted that Emerson's « is the best book about England ever written by any man not a native of the country. »

A SHORT LIST OF FRENCH BOOKS

I.) CRITICAL STUDIES

E. Montégut, « Du Caractère Anglais », in *Essais sur la Littérature Anglaise* (1883).

W. P. Trent, « Emerson », pp.. 213-221 of *Littérature Américaine*, trad. H. D. Davray.

M. Dugard, *R. W. Emerson, sa vie et son œuvre*, (1907).

M. Dugard, Introduction to *Pages Choisies de R. W. Emerson*.

R. Michaud, Introduction to *Autobiographie*.

M. Maeterlinck, Preface to *Sept Essais*.

Ch. M. Garnier, *Emerson, annonciateur*, in « Revue de Synthèse Historique », tome XXIX (1922).

P. Chavannes, Introduction to *Les Anglais*.

A. Digeon, *Emerson et le caractère anglais*, « Mercure de France », 1er juillet 1918.

II.) FRENCH TRANSLATIONS

Pages Choisies, translated by M. Dugard.
Les Anglais, by P. Chavannes.
Autobiographie, by R. Michaud. (2 vol.).
Essais politiques et sociaux, by M. Dugard.
Les Forces éternelles, by K. Johnston.
Hommes représentatifs, by J. Izoulet et F. Roz.
Sept Essais, by I. Will.
Société et Solitude, by M. Dugard.
La Conduite de la Vie, by M. Dugard.

III.) SOME FRENCH VIEWS ABOUT THE ENGLISH

Sorbière, *Relation d'un Voyage en Angleterre*, (1664).

Misson, *Mémoires et observations faites par un Voyageur en Angleterre*, (1698).

Le Sage de la Colombière, *Remarques sur l'Angleterre* faites par un Voyageur, (1715).

Béalt de Muralt, *Lettres sur les Anglais et les Français*, (1725 ; from recollections of a journey made in 1695).
Montesquieu, Notes de Voyage (1729-1731) ; *Œuvres Complètes*, éd. Lefèvre, t. II, p. 484 ; (1839).
Voltaire, *Letters Concerning the English Nation* (1st Engl. éd. 1733). *Lettres écrites de Londres sur les Anglais*, (Lettres Philosophiques), 1734. (Voltaire stayed in England from 1726 to 1729).
Abbé Prévost, *Mémoires d'un homme de Qualité* (1730-1731) ; *Le Pour et Contre* (1733-1740).
Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des Lois*, 1748. (Liv. XI, chap. vi ; XIX, ch. xxvii ; XX, ch. vii ; XXI, ch. vii).
P. J. Grosley, *Londres*, (in 1765), 3 vols. 1774.
H. Taine, *Histoire de la Littérature anglaise* (1866-1868) passim ; especially tome IV, Le Passé et le Présent ; *Notes sur l'Angleterre* (in 1863), 1871.
Pierre de Coulevain, *L'Ile Inconnue*.
Max O'Rell, *John Bull et son île*.
« Fœmina », *L'Ame Anglaise*.
R. Recouly, *En Angleterre*.
L. Cazamian, *L'Angleterre Moderne*.
E. Boutmy, *Essai d'une Psychologie politique du peuple anglais* au XIX^e^ siècle.

ENGLISH TRAITS*

WHY ENGLAND IS ENGLAND

The problem of the traveller landing at Liverpool is, Why England is England ? What are the elements of that power which the English hold over other nations ? If there be one test of national genius universally accepted, it is success, and if there be one successful country in the universe for the last millennium, that country is England.

A wise traveller will naturally choose to visit the best of actual nations ; and an American has more reasons than another to draw him to Britain. In all that is done or begun by the Americans towards right thinking or practice, we are met by a civilization already settled and overpowering. The culture of the day, the thoughts and aims of men, are English thoughts and aims. A nation considerable for a thousand years, it has, in the last centuries, obtained the ascendant, and stamped the knowledge, activity, and power of mankind with its impress. Those who resist it do not feel it or obey it less. The Russian in his snows is aiming to be English. The Turk and Chinese also are making awkward efforts to be English. The practical commonsense of modern society, the utilitarian direction which labour, laws, opinion, religion take, is the natural genius of the British mind. The influence of France is a constituent of modern

(*) Explanatory notes are marked with figures ; and commentaries, with letters. — Various passages have been quoted from French works dealing with the same subjects. These make no pretension to be exhaustive. They are merely given as incentives to the reader to hunt up and bring together yet many more parallel passages.

civility, but not enough opposed to the English for the most wholesome effect. The American is only the continuation of the English genius into new conditions, more or less propitious.

But we have the same difficulty in making a social or moral estimate of England, as the sheriff finds in drawing a jury to try some cause which has agitated the whole community, and on which everybody finds himself an interested party. Officers, jurors, judges, have all taken sides (1). England has inoculated all nations with her civilization, intelligence, and tastes; and, to resist the tyranny and prepossession (2) of the British element, a serious man must aid himself, by comparing with it the civilizations of the farthest east and west, the old Greek, the Oriental, and, much more, the ideal standard, if only by means of the very impatience which English forms are sure to awoken in independent minds.

I. LAND

THE CLIMATE

The territory has singular perfection. The climate is warmer by many degrees than it is entitled to by latitude. Neither hot nor cold, there is no hour in the whole year when one cannot work. Here is no winter but a temperature which makes no exhausting demand on human strength, and allows the attainment of the largest stature. Charles the Second said, « it invited men abroad more days in the year and

(1) *To take sides :* to form an opinion ; to adhere to a party.

(2) *Prepossession :* favourable prejudice.

more hours in the day than any other country » (A). Then England has all the materials of a working country except wood. The constant rain, — a rain with every tide, in some parts of the island, — keeps its multitude of rivers full, and brings agricultural production up to the highest point. It has plenty of water, of stone, of potter's clay, of coal, of salt, and of iron. The land naturally abounds with game, immense heaths and downs are paved with quails, grouse, and woodcock, and the shores are animated by water birds. The rivers and the surrounding sea spawn (1) with fish ; there are salmon for the rich, and sprats and herrings for the poor. In the northern lochs, the herring are in innumerable shoals (2) ; at one season, the country people say, the lakes contain one part water and two parts fish.

The only drawback on this industrial conveniency is the darkness of its sky. The night and day are too nearly of a colour. It strains the eyes to read and to write. Add the coal smoke. In the manufacturing towns, the fine soot or *blacks* darken the day, give white sheep the colour of black sheep, discolour the human saliva, contaminate the air, poison many plants, and corrode the monuments and buildings.

The London fog aggravates the distempers of the sky, and sometimes justifies the epigram on the climate by an English wit, « in a fine day, looking up a chimney ; in a foul day, looking down one. » A gentleman in Liverpool told me that he found he could do without a fire in his parlour about one day in the year. It is, however, pretended that the enormous consumption of coal in the island is also felt in modifying the general climate.

(A) « The English value their Country at a very high rate ; they boast of it in an extraordinary manner, and prefer it to all the Countries in the world, as they do themselves to all other nations. » (BÉALT DE MURALT, *Letter* VI.)

(1) *To spawn with :* to produce large quantities of fish (or frog, or molluscs, etc).

(2) *Shoal :* crowd of fish swimming in company.

THE POSITION

Factitious climate, factitious position. England resembles a ship in its shape, and, if it were one, its best admiral could not have worked it, or anchored it in a more judicious or effective position. Sir John Herschel said, « London was the centre of the terrene globe. » The shopkeeping nation, to use a shop word, has a *good stand*. England is anchored at the side of Europe, and right in the heart of the modern world. The sea, which, according to Virgil's famous line, divided the poor Britons utterly from the world (1), proved to be the ring of marriage with all nations. It is not down in the books, — it is written only in the geologic strata — that fortunate day when a wave of the German Ocean burst the old isthmus which joined Kent and Cornwall to France, and gave to this fragment of Europe its impregnable sea wall, cutting off an island of eight hundred miles in length with an irregular breadth reaching to three hundred miles ; a territory large enough for independence enriched with every seed of national power, so near, that it can see the harvests of the continent ; and so far, that who would cross the strait must be an expert mariner ready for tempests. As America, Europe and Asia lie, these Britons have precisely the best commercial position in the whole planet, and are sure of a market for all the goods they can manufacture. And to make these advantages avail, the river Thames must dig its spacious outlet to the sea from the heart of the kingdom, giving road and landing to innumerable ships, and all the conveniency to trade, that a people so skilful and sufficient in economizing waterfront by docks, warehouses, and lighters required. When James the First (2) declared his purpose of punishing London by removing his Court, the Lord Mayor replied, « that in removing his royal presence from his lieges, they hoped he would leave them the Thames. »

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(1) « Penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos » (VIRGIL, *Eglog.* I, 66)

(2) *James the First*, 1604-1625.

II. RACE

The British are free, forcible men in a country where life is safe, and has reached the greatest value. They give the bias to the current age ; and that, not by chance or by mass, but by their character, and by the number of individuals among them of personal ability. It has been denied that the English have genius. Be it as it may, men of vast intellect have been born on their soil, and they have made or applied the principal inventions. They have sound bodies, and supreme endurance in war and in labour. The spawning force (1) of the race has sufficed to the colonization of great parts of the world ; yet it remains to be seen whether they can make good the exodus of millions (2) from Great Britain, amounting, in 1852, to more than a thousand a day. They have assimilating force, since they are imitated by their foreign subjects ; and they are still aggressive and propagandist, enlarging the dominion of their arts and liberty. Their laws are hospitable and slavery does not exist under them. What oppression exists is incidental and temporary ; their success is not sudden or fortunate, but they have maintained constancy and self-equality for many ages.

Is this power due to their race, or to some other cause ? Men hear gladly of the power of blood or race. Everybody likes to know that his advantages cannot be attributed to air, soil, sea, or to local wealth, as mines and quarries, nor to laws and traditions, nor to fortune, but to superior brain, as it makes the praise more personal to him.

We anticipate in the doctrine of race something like that law of physiology, that whatever bone, muscle, or essential organ is found in one healthy individual, the same part or organ may be found in or near the same place in its congener ; and we look to

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(1) *Spawning force :* multiplying power.

(2) *Exodus of millions :* 800.000 Britishers emigrated in 1853 ; then the rate went down and only 140.000 emigrated in 1898. The rate has gone up again since : 454.000 in 1911.

find in the son every mental and moral property that existed in the ancestor. In race, it is not the broad shoulders, or litheness, or stature, that give advantage, but a symmetry that reaches as far as to the wit. Then the miracle and renown begin.

But whilst race works immortally to keep its own, it is resisted by other forces. Civilization is a re-agent, and eats away the old traits. The Arabs of to-day are the Arabs of Pharoah ; but the Briton of to-day is a very different person from Cassibelaunus (1) or Ossian (2).

MIXED ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH CHARACTER

The English composite character betrays a mixed origin. Everything English is a fusion of distant and antagonistic elements. The language is mixed ; the names of men are of different nations — three languages, three or four nations ; — the currents of thought are counter : contemplation and practical skill ; active intellect and dead conservatism ; world-wide enterprise, and devoted use and wont ; aggressive freedom and hospitable law, with bitter class-legislation; a people scattered by their wars and affairs over the face of the whole earth, and homesick to a man ; a country of extremes — dukes and chartists (3), Bishops of Durham (4) and naked heathen colliers : — nothing can be praised in it without damning (5) exceptions, and nothing denounced without salvos of cordial praise.

Neither do this people appear to be of one stem ; but collectively a better race than any from which they are derived. Nor is it easy to trace it home to its original seats. — Who can call by right names what races are in Britain ? Who can trace them historical-

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(1) *Cassibelaunus :* chief of a British tribe who fiercely resisted J. Cæsar's second invasion, 54 B. C.

(2) *Ossian :* a legendary Celtic bard, supposed to have lived about the 3rd century A. D.

(3) *Chartist :* adherent to the democratic reform movement, (or *Chartism*) of 1837-1848.

(4) The *Bishop of Durham* is supposed to get the highest salary as an English bishop.

(5) *To damn :* to censure, to condemn.

ly? Who can discriminate them anatomically, or metaphysically?

THE CELTS

1. The sources from which tradition derives their stock are mainly three. And, first, they are of the oldest blood of the world — the Celtic. Some peoples are deciduous (1) or transitory. Where are the Greeks? where the Etrurians? where the Romans? But the Celts or Sidonides are an old family, of whose beginning there is no memory, and their end is likely to be still more remote in the future: for they have endurance and productiveness. They planted Britain, and gave to the seas and mountains names which are poems, and imitate the pure voices of nature. They are favourably remembered in the oldest records of Europe. They had no violent feudal tenure, but the husbandman owned the land. They had an alphabet, astronomy, priestly culture, and a sublime creed. They have a hidden and precarious genius. They made the best popular literature of the middle ages in the songs of Merlin (2), and the tender and delicious mythology of Arthur (3).

2. The English come mainly from the Germans, whom the Romans found hard to conquer in two hundred and ten years, — say, impossible to conquer, when one remembers the long sequel; a people about whom, in the old empire, the rumour ran, there was never any that meddled with them that repented it not.

3. Charlemagne, halting one day in a town of Narbonnese Gaul, looked out of a window, and saw a fleet of Northmen cruising in the Mediterranean. They even entered the port of the town where he was, causing no small alarm and sudden manning and arming of his galleys. As they put out to sea again, the emperor gazed long after them, his eyes bathed in

(1) *Deciduous*: falling or decaying periodically.
(2) *Merlin* the Enchanter.
(3) *King Arthur*, the central hero in the legends of the knights of the Round Table.

tears. « I am tormented with sorrow, » he said, « when I foresee the evils they will bring on my posterity. » There was reason for these Xerxes' tears (1). The men who have built a ship and invented the rig — cordage, sail, compass, and pump — the working in and out of port, have acquired much more than a ship. Now arm them, and every shore is at their mercy. For, if they have not numerical superiority where they anchor, they have only to sail a mile or two to find it. Bonaparte's art of war, namely of concentrating force on the point of attack, must always be theirs who have the choice of the battle-ground. Of course they come into the fight from a higher ground of power than the land-nations ; and can engage them on shore with a victorious advantage in the retreat. As soon as the shores are sufficiently peopled to make piracy a losing business (2), the same skill and courage are ready for the service of trade.

POLITICAL ORGANISATION OF THE NORTHMEN

The *Heimskringla*, or Sagas (3) of the Kings of Norway, collected by Snorri Sturlason, is the Iliad and Odyssey of English history. Its portraits, like Homer's, are strongly individualized. The Sagas describe a monarchical republic like Sparta. The government disappears before the importance of citizens. A sparse population gives this high worth to every man. Individuals are often noticed as very handsome persons, which trait only brings the story nearer to the English race. Then the solid material interest predominates, so dear to English understanding, wherein the association is logical, between merit and land. The heroes of the Sagas are not the knights of South Europe. No vapouring of France and Spain has corrupted them. They are substantial farmers, whom the rough times have forced to defend their properties. They have

(1) *Xerxes*, King of Persia (485-465 B. C.) is reported to have shed tears on witnessing his fleet destroyed at Salamis.

(2) *A losing business :* an unprofitable transaction.

(3) *Saga :* a mediaeval Norvegian or Icelandic prose narrative of heroic adventures.

weapons which they use in a determined manner, by no means for chivalry, but for their acres. They are people considerably advanced in rural arts, living amphibiously on a rough coast, and drawing half their food from the sea, and half from the land. They have herds of cows, and malt, wheat, bacon, butter, and cheese. They fish in the fiord, and hunt the deer. A king among these farmers has a varying power, sometimes not exceeding the authority of a sheriff (1). A king was maintained much as, in some of our country districts, a winter-schoolmaster is quartered, a week here, a week there, and a fortnight on the next farm — on all the farmers in rotation (2). This the king calls going into guest-quarters ; and it was the only way in which, in a poor country, a poor king, with many retainers, could be kept alive, when he leaves his own farm to collect his dues through the kingdom.

The Normans came out of France into England (3) worse men than they went into it, one hundred and sixty years before. They had lost their own language and learned the Romance or barbarous Latin of the Gauls ; and had acquired, with the language, all the vices it had names for. The conquest has obtained in the chronicles the name of the « memory of sorrow. » Twenty thousand thieves landed at Hastings. These founders of the House of Lords were greedy and ferocious dragoons, sons of greedy and ferocious pirates. They were all alike, they took everything they could carry, they burned, harried (4), violated, tortured, and killed, until everything English was brought to the verge of ruin. Such, however is the illusion of antiquity and wealth, that decent and dignified men now existing, boast their descent from these filthy thieves, who showed a far juster conviction of their own merits, by assuming for their types the swine, goat, jackal, leopard, wolf, and snake, which they severally resembled.

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(1) *Sheriff* : the chief officer of the Crown in an English county.
(2) *In rotation* : in recurring turn.
(3) In 1066, after the battle of Hastings.
(4) *To harry* : to ravage, to spoil.

England yielded to the Danes and Northmen in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and was the receptacle into which all the mettle (1) of that strenuous population was poured. The continued draught (2) of the best men in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, to these piratical expeditions, exhausted those countries, like a tree which bears much fruit when young, and these have been second-rate powers ever since. The power of the race migrated, and left Norway void.

THE MAKING OF THE ENGLISH RACE

It took many generations to trim (3), and comb and perfume the first boat-load of Norse pirates into royal highnesses and most noble Knights of the Garter : but every sparkle of ornament dates back to the Norse boat. There will be time enough to mellow (4) this strength into civility and religion. It is a medical fact, that the children of the blind see ; the children of felons have a healthy conscience. Many a mean, dastardly (5) boy is, at the age of puberty, transformed into a serious and generous youth.

The mildness of the following ages has not quite effaced these traits of Odin (6), as the rudiment of a structure matured in the tiger is said to be still found unabsorbed in the Caucasian man. The nation has a tough, acrid, animal nature, which centuries of churching and civilizing have not been able to sweeten. Alfieri (7) said, « the crimes of Italy were the proof of the superiority of the stock (8), » and one may say of England, that this watch moves on a splinter (9) of adamant (10). The English uncultured are a brutal nation. The crimes recorded in their calendars leave

(1) *Mettle :* native courage, or energy.
(2) *Draught* (from *to draw*) taking away ; emigration.
(3) *To trim :* to make neat and tidy.
(4) *To mellow :* to soften.
(5) *Dastardly :* cowardly.
(6) *Odin* (Wodan, Wotan) : the Scandinavian god of strength and war (cf. *Wednesday ; i. e.* Wodan's day).
(7) *Alfieri :* a famous Italian tragedy writer (1749-1803).
(8) *Stock :* race.
(9) *Splinter :* sharp edge ; thin piece.
(10) *Adamant :* diamond ; any hard and tough substance.

nothing to be desired in the way of cold malignity (A). Dear to the English heart is a fair stand-up fight. The brutality of the manners in the lower class appears in the boxing, bear-baiting (1), cock-fighting, love of executions and in the readiness for a set-to (2) in the streets, delightful to the English of all classes. The costermongers (3) of London streets hold cowardice in loathing (4). — « we must work our fists well : we are all handy with our fists. » The public schools are charged with being bear-gardens (5) of brutal strength, and are liked by the people for that cause. The fagging (6) is attrait of the same quality. Medwin, in the *Life of Shelley* (7), relates, that, at a military school, they rolled up a young man in a snowball, and left him so in his room, while the other cadets went to church ; — and crippled him for life. They have retained impressment (8), deck-flogging, army-flogging and school-flogging (9). The torture of criminals, and the rack (10) for extorting evidence, were

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(A) « 'Tis easy to discover in them some little remains of *fierceness* which is the basis of their ancient character. And in my opinion they retain something from the different nations that conquered them. They drink like the Saxons, love hunting like the Danes, and the Romans left them their inclination for bloody shows and contempt of Death. » (B. DE MURALT, *Letter* I). These harsh features of the English temper have almost entirely worn off in the latter half of the XIXth Century).

(1) *Bear-baiting :* an old sport consisting in letting dogs loose to bait, *i. e.* bite and harass bears.

(2) *A set to :* a boxing contest, a fight.

(3) *Costermonger :* man who sells fruit or vegetables from a barrow in the street.

(4) *Loathing :* abhorrence.

(5) *Bear-gardens :* gardens where bear-baiting took place in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries.

(6) *Fagging :* a custom in English schools whereby juniors boarders do menial service for seniors (see *Tom Brown's Schooldays*).

(7) Captain *Medwin*, Shelley's cousin and schoolfellow, wrote a *Life* of the poet, which was published in 1847.

(8) *Impressment :* forcing of men to serve in the army or navy. (*Fr.* presse).

(9) All these flogging cases have disappeared since Emerson denounced them.

(10) *Rack :* an instrument of torture for pulling the limbs out of joints.

slowly disused. Of the criminal statutes, Sir Samuel Romilly (1) said, « I have examined the codes of all nations, and ours is the worst, and worthy of the Anthropophagi. » In the last session (2), the House of Commons was listening to details of flogging and torture practised in the jails.

As soon as this land, thus geographically posted got a hardy (3) people into it, they could not help becoming the sailors and factors of the globe. From childhood they dabbled (4) in water, they swam like fishes, their playthings were boats. In the case of the ship-money (5), the judges delivered it for law that « England being an island, the very midland shires (6) therein are all to be accounted maritime : » As early as the Conquest, it is remarked, in explanation of the wealth of England, that its merchants trade to all countries.

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On the English face are combined decision and nerve, with the fair complexion, blue eyes, and open and florid aspect. Hence the love of truth, hence the sensibility, the fine perception, and poetic construction. The fair Saxon man, with open front and honest meaning, domestic, affectionate, is not the wood out of which cannibal, or inquisitor, or assassin is made, but he is moulded for law, lawful trade, civility, marriage, the nurture of children, for colleges, churches, charities, and colonies.

They are rather manly than warlike. When the war is over, the mask falls from the affectionate and domestic tastes, which make them women in kindness. The two sexes are co-present in the English mind. I apply to Britannia, queen of seas and colonies, the words in which her latest novelist portrays his

(1) *Samuel Romilly* (1757-1818), an English jurist and political writer.
(2) *I. e.* in 1848.
(3) *Hardy :* bold, robust.
(4) *To dabble :* to move arms and feet.
(5) *Ship money :* a tax levied by Charles I. which Hampden refused to pay, in 1637.
(6) *The very midland shires :* even the midland counties themselves.

heroine : « she is as mild as she is game (1), and as game as she is mild (A). » The English delight in the antagonism which combines in one person the extremes of courage and tenderness. Nelson, dying at Trafalgar, sends his love to Lord Collingwood, and like an innocent schoolboy that goes to bed, says, « Kiss me, Hardy, » and turns to sleep (2).

PHYSICAL HEALTH

They have a vigorous health, and last well into middle and old age. The old men are as red as roses, and still handsome. A clear skin, a peach-bloom complexion and good teeth, are found all over the island. They use a plentiful and nutritious diet (3). The operative (4) cannot subsist on water-cresses. Beef, mutton wheatbread, and malt liquors are universal among the firstclass labourers. Good feeding is a chief point of national pride among the vulgar, and, in their caricatures, they represent the Frenchman as a poor, starved body. It is curious that Tacitus found the English beer already in use among the Germans : « they make from barley or wheat a drink corrupted into some resemblance to wine. »

They have more constitutional energy than any other people. They think, with Henri Quatre, that manly exercises are the foundation of that elevation of mind which gives one nature ascendancy over another ; or, with the Arabs, that the days spent in the chase are not counted in the length of life. They box, run, shoot, ride, row, and sail from pole to pole. They eat, and drink, and live jolly in the open air, putting a bar of solid sleep between day and day. They walk and ride as fast as they can, their heads bent forward, as if urged on some pressing affair. The French say,

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(1) *Game :* brave .

(A) « Their bravery is universally established with good reason... ; yet few of them hunt after war in foreign countries... They neither go to war nor much esteem those who do. » (B. DE MURALT, *Letter* I).

(2) Read the death of Nelson in R. SOUTHEY's *Life of Nelson*.

(3) *Diet :* quantity of food.

(4) *Operative :* workman.

that Englishmen in the street always walk straight before them like mad dogs. Men and women walk with infatuation (A). As soon as he can handle a gun, hunting is the fine art of every Englishman of condition. They are the most voracious people of prey that ever existed. Every season turns out the aristocracy into the country, to shoot and fish. The more vigorous run out of the island to Europe, to America, to Asia, to Africa, and Australia, to hunt with fury by gun, by trap, by harpoon, by lasso, with dog, with horse, with elephant, or with dromedary, all the game that is in nature.

The gentlemen are always on horseback, and have brought horses to an ideal perfection — the English racer (1) is a factitious breed. A score or two of mounted gentlemen may frequently be seen running like centaurs down a hill nearly as steep as the roof of a house. Every inn-room is lined with pictures of races ; telegraphs communicate, every hour, tidings of the heats (2) from Newmarket and Ascot (3), and the House of Commons adjourns over the « Derby Day » (4).

III. ABILITY

ENGLISH DOGGEDNESS

The island was renowned in antiquity for its breed of mastiffs, so fierce, that when their teeth were set, you must cut their heads off to part them. The man

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(A) « The English take much pleasure in walking... ; they always walk fast... They walk together, for the most part without speaking ; they go forward constantly, and nothing can amuse or put them out of the way. » (B. DE MURALT, *Letter* III).

(1) *Racer :* racing horse.
(2) *Heats :* races, contests.
(3) *Newmarket, Ascot :* famous English racecourses.
(4) *Derby Day :* a fashionable annual horse race run at Epsom since 1780.

was like his dog (A). The people have that nervous bilious temperament, which is known by medical men to resist every means employed to make its possessor subservient to the will of others. The English game is main force to main force, the planting of foot to foot, fair play and open field — a rough tug without trick or dodging, till one or both come to piece. They hate craft and subtlety. They neither poison nor waylay, nor assassinate ; and, when they have pounded each other to a poultice, they will shake hands and be friends for the remainder of their lives (B).

ENGLISH REALISTIC LOGIC

There is a necessity on them to be logical (C). They would hardly greet the good that did not logically fall — as if it excluded their own merit or shook their understandings. They are jealous of minds that have much facility of association, from an instinctive fear that the seeing of many relations to their thought might impair this serial continuity and lucrative concentration. They are impatient of genius, or of minds addicted to contemplation (D), and cannot conceal their contempt for sallies of thought, however lawful,

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(A) « ... I would readily say that there is a strong resemblance between the English and their dogs. Both are silent, headstrong, lazy, unfit for fatigue ; intrepid, eager in fight, insensible of blows, and incapable of parting. » (B. DE MURALT, *Letter* III).

(B) « The great cruelty of the English consists rather in tolerating Evil than in doing it. 'Tis certain they abhor all cruel things ; duels, assassinations, and generally all sorts of violence are very uncommon in this country, and I don't remember to have heard anything of poisoning. » (B. DE MURALT, *Letter* III).

(C) Contrast with this the following statement : « If logic were a man and lived in England, he would be the loneliest person in the three Kingdoms. » (PRICE COLLIER, *England and the English*, 1909).

(D) « We underrate gifts and exceptional qualities ; because there is no quickening appreciation for the exceptional best in a man, and because we overvalue the good behaviour, the sound physique, the commonplace virtues of mediocrity. » (H. G. WELLS, *An Englishman looks at the World*, 1912).

whose steps they cannot count by their wonted rule. Neither do they reckon better a syllogism that ends in syllogism. For they have a supreme eye to facts, and theirs is a logic that brings salt to soup, hammer to nail, oar to boat, the logic of cooks, carpenters, and chemists, following the sequence of nature, and one on which words make no impression.

Their practical vision is spacious, and they can hold many threads without entangling them. All the steps they orderly take ; but with the high logic of never confounding the minor and major proposition ; keeping their eye on their aim, in all the complicity and delay incident to (1) the several series of means they employ.

ENGLISH FAIRNESS

Into this English logic, however, an infusion of justice enters, not so apparent in other races — a belief in the existence of two sides. and the resolution to see fair play. There is on every question, an appeal from the assertion of the parties, to the proof of what is asserted. They are impious in their scepticism of a theory, but kiss the dust before a fact. Is it a machine, is it a charter, is it a boxer in the ring, is it a candidate on the hustings — the universe of Englishmen will suspend their judgment, until the trial can be had. They are not to be led by a phrase, they want a working plan, a working machine, a working constitution, and will sit out the trial, and abide by the issue, and reject all preconceived theories. In politics they put blunt questions, which must be answered ; Who is to pay the taxes ? what will you do for trade ? what for corn ? what for the spinner ?

This singular fairness and its results strike the French with surprise. Philip de Commines says, « Now, in my opinion, among all the sovereignties I know in the world, that in which the public good is best attended to, and the least violence exercised

(1) *Incident to :* belonging to.
(2) *Hustings :* temporary platform from which (before 1872) candidates for Parliament were nominated.

on the people, is that of England. » Life is safe, and personal rights ; and what is freedom, without security ? Montesquieu said, « England is the freest country in the world. If a man in England had as many enemies as hairs on his head, no harm would happen to him (1). »

ENGLISH COMMON SENSE

Their self-respect, their faith in causation, and their realistic logic or coupling of means to ends, have given them the leadership of the modern world. Montesquieu said , « No people have true common sense but those who are born in England. » This common sense is a perception of all the conditions of our earthly existence, of laws that can be stated, and of laws that cannot be stated, or that are learned only by practice, in which allowance for friction is made (A). They are impious in their scepticism of theory, and in high departments they are cramped and sterile. But the unconditional surrender to facts, and the choice of means to reach their ends, are as admirable as with ants and bees.

UTILITARIAN PROPENSITY

The bias (1) of the nation is a passion for utility.

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(1) « L'Angleterre est à présent (1730) le plus libre pays qui soit au monde... Quand un homme en Angleterre aurait autant d'ennemis que de cheveux sur la tête, il ne lui en arriverait rien : c'est beaucoup, car la santé de l'âme est aussi nécessaire que celle du corps. » (MONTESQUIEU, *Notes de voyage sur l'Angleterre*. See also *L'Esprit des Lois*, book XIX, chap. XXVII.)

(A) « The English, for the most part, have a greater share of good sense than is generally observed among other Nations... Good sense is what they esteem most and seldom talk of a man for having wit. They speak of things as they apprehend them... so that their conversation is always agreeable by new thoughts. We find they have just ideas on many things, whereon other nations are mistaken. » (B. DE MURALT, *Letter* IV).

(2) *Bias* ; natural propensity ; inclination.

They love the lever, the screw, and pulley, the Flanders draught-horse, the waterfall, wind-mills, tide-mills ; the sea and the wind to bear their freight ships. More than the diamond Koh-i-noor (1), which glitters among their crown jewels, they prize that dull pebble (2) which is wiser than a man, whose poles turn themselves to the poles of the world, and whose axis is parallel to the axis of the world. Now, their toys are steam and galvanism. They are heavy at the fine arts, but adroit at the coarse ; not good in jewelry or mosaics, but the best iron-masters, colliers, wool-combers, and tanners in Europe. They apply themselves to agriculture, to draining, to resisting encroachments of sea, wind, travelling sands, cold and wet subsoil ; to fishery, to manufacture of indispensable staples (3) — salt, plumbago, leather, wool, glass, pottery, and brick — to bees and silk-worms ; — and by their steady combinations they succeed. A manufacturer sits down to dinner in a suit of clothes which was wool on a sheep's back at sunrise. You dine with a gentleman on venison, pheasant, quail, pigeons, poultry, mushrooms, and pine-apples, all the growth of his estate. They are neat husbands (4) for ordering all their tools pertaining to house and field. All are well kept. There is no want and no waste. They study use and fitness in their building, in the order of their dwellings, and in their dress. The Frenchman invented the ruffle (5), the Englishman added the shirt. The Englishman wears a sensible coat buttoned to the chin, of rough but solid and lasting texture. If he is a lord, he dresses a little worse than a commoner. They have diffused the taste for plain substantial hats, shoes, and coats, through Europe. They think him the best-

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(1) *Koh-i-noor :* a famous diamond, supposed to have been found in the mines of Golconda.

(2) *Dull pebble :* the loadstone.

(3) *Staples :* raw materials.

(4) *Husbands :* managers.

(5) *Ruffle :* a folded frill of linen or muslin worn as trimming round the neck.

dressed man, whose dress is so fit for his use that you cannot notice or remember to describe it. (A)

They secure the essentials in their diet, in their arts, and manufactures. Every article of cutlery shows, in its shape, thought and long experience of workmen. They put the expense in the right place, as, in their sea-steamers, in the solidity of the machinery and the strength of the boat. The admirable equipment of their Arctic ships carries London to the pole. They build roads, aqueducts, warm and ventilate houses. And they have impressed their directness and practical habit on modern civilization.

In trade, the Englishman believes that nobody breaks who ought not to break ; and that if he do not make trade everything, it will make him nothing ; and acts on this belief. The spirit of system, attention to details, and the subordination of details, or, the not driving things too finely (which is charged on the Germans), constitute that despatch of business, which makes the mercantile power of England.

In war, the Englishman looks to his means. He is of the opinion of Civilis, his German ancestor, whom Tacitus reports as holding « that the gods are on the side of the strongest (1) ; » — a sentence which Bonaparte unconsciously translated, when he said, « that he had noticed that Providence always favoured the heaviest battalion. » Their military science propounds that if the weight of the advancing column is greater than that of the resisting, the latter is destroyed. Therefore Wellington (2), when he came to the army in Spain, had every man weighed, first with accoutrements, and then without ; believing that the force of an army depended on the weight and power of the individual soldiers, in spite of can-

(A) Cf. : « Il y a un luxe solide, fondé, non pas sur le raffinement de la vanité, mais sur celui des besoins réels ; et l'on ne cherche guère dans les choses que le plaisir que la nature y a mis. » MONTESQUIEU, *L'Esprit des lois*, book XIX, chap. XXVII).

(1) « Victrix causa diis placuit. »

(2) *Wellington* (The Duke of), an English general (1769-1852), fought against Napoleon in Spain and at Waterloo.

non. Lord Palmerston (1) told the House of Commons, that more care is taken of the health and comfort of English troops than of any other troops in the world ; and that, hence the English can put more men into the rank, on the day of action, on the field of battle, than any other army. Lord Collingwood (2) was accustomed to tell his men, that, if they could fire three well-directed broadsides in five minutes, no vessel could resist them ; and, from constant practice, they came to do it in three minutes and a half.

But conscious that no race of better men exists, they rely most on the simplest means ; and do not like ponderous and difficult tactics, but delight to bring the affair hand to hand, where the victory lies with the strength, courage, and endurance of the individual combatants. They adopt every improvement in ring, in motor, in weapons, but they fundamentally believe that the best stratagem in naval war, is to lay your ship close alongside of the enemy's ship, and bring all your guns to bear on him, until you or he go to the bottom. This is the old fashion, which never goes out of fashion, neither in nor out of England.

It is not usually a point of honour, nor a religious sentiment, and never any whim (4) that they will shed their blood for : but usually property, and right measured by property, that breeds revolution. They have no Indian taste for a tomahawk-dance, no French taste for a badge (5) or a proclamation. The Englishman is peaceably (6) minding his business, and earning his day's wages. But if you offer to lay hand on his day's wages, on his cow, or his right in common, or his shop, he will fight to the Judgment (7). Magna Charta, jury trial, *habeas corpus*,

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(1) *Lord Palmerston :* an English statesman and minister (1784-1865).

(2) *Lord Collingwood :* an English admiral, and Nelson's friend.

(3) *Rig :* equipment.

(4) *Whim :* fanciful idea.

(5) *Badge :* decoration.

(6) *Peaceably :* peacefully.

(7) *The Judgment :* Doomsday.

star-chamber, ship-money, Popery, Plymouth colony, American Revolution (1), are all questions involving a yeoman's right to his dinner, and, except as touching that, would not have lashed the British nation to rage and revolt.

PERTINACITY

They have a wonderful heat in the pursuit of a public aim. Private persons exhibit, in scientific and antiquarian researches, the same pertinacity as the nation showed in the coalitions in which it yoked Europe against the empire of Bonaparte, one after the other defeated, and still renewed, until the sixth hurled him from his seat.

Sir John Herschel (2), in completion of the work of his father, who had made the catalogue of the stars of the northern hemisphere, expatriated himself for years at the Cape of Good Hope, finished his inventory of the southern heaven, came home, and redacted it in eight years more ; — a work whose value does not begin until thirty years have elapsed, and thenceforward a record to all ages of the highest import. The Admiralty sent out the Arctic expeditions year after year, in search of Sir John Franklin (2), until, at last, they have threaded their way through polar pack (3) and Behring's Straits, and solved the geo-

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(1) *Magna Charta :* the Charter granted by King John in 1215 to the English people as a foundation of their liberty ; — *Jury trial :* a judiciary institution of English origin safeguarding the rights of the accused one ; — *Habeas corpus :* another individual guarantee, granted by an act of parliament, in 1679 ; — *Star Chamber :* a Court erected in 1487 to punish all those who were guilty of interfering with justice by force or intrigue, (abolished in 1641) ; — *Ship money :* a tax raised by Charles I, which caused rebellion in England ; — *Popery :* the temporal power of the Roman Pope ; — *Plymouth colony :* the first settlement of colonists in North America (1620).

(2) *John Herschel* ; a distinguished astronomer (1792-1871), the son of *Frederick Herschel* (1738-1822), the originator of star astronomy.

(3) *Admiral John Franklin* (1786-1847), an English navigator who perished in trying to reach the north Pole.

(4) *Pack :* large area covered with icebergs.

graphical problem. Lord Elgin (1), at Athens, saw the imminent ruin of the Greek remains, set up his scaffoldings, in spite of epigrams, and, after five years' labour to collect them, got his marbles on shipboard. The ship struck a rock and went to the bottom. He had them all fished up, by divers, at a vast expense, and brought to London.

UNIVERSAL EXCELLENCE OF THE ENGLISH

In every path of practical activity, they have gone even (2) with the best. There is no secret of war, in which they have not shown mastery. The steam-chamber of Watt, the locomotive of Stephenson, the cotton-mule of Roberts, perform the labour of the world. There is no department of literature, of science or of useful art, in which they have not produced a first-rate book. It is England, whose opinion is waited-for on the merit of a new invention, an improved science. And in the complications of the trade and politics of their vast empire, they have been equal to every exigency, with counsel and with conduct. Is it their luck, or is it in the chambers of their brain, — it is their commercial advantage, that whatever light appears in better method or happy invention, breaks out *in their race.* They are a family to which a destiny attaches, and the Banshee (3) has sworn that a male heir shall never be wanting. They have a wealth of men to fill important posts, and the vigilance of party criticism insures the selection of a competent person (4).

ARTIFICIALITY

A proof of the energy of the British people is the highly artificial construction of the whole fabric. The

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(1) *Lord Elgin* (1766-1841) a diplomat and antiquarian who brought back to London fragments of statuary from the Athenian Parthenon.

(2) *Even :* on the same rank.

(3) *Banshee :* a kind of fairy who attaches herself to a particular person, house, tribe, or nation.

(4) Cp. the phrase : « The right man in the right place. »

climate and geography, I said, were factitious, as if the hands of man had arranged the conditions. The same character pervades the whole kingdom. Bacon said, « Rome was a state not subject to paradoxes ; » but England subsists by antagonisms and contradictions. The foundations of its greatness are the rolling waves ; and from first to last, it is a museum of anomalies. This foggy and rainy country furnishes the world with astronomical observations. Its short rivers do not afford water-power, but the land shakes under the thunder of the mills. There is no gold mine of any importance, but there is more gold in England than in all other countries. It is too far north for the culture of the vine, but the wines of all countries are in its docks. The French Comte de Lauraguais (1) said, « no fruit ripens in England but a baked apple; » but oranges and pine-apples are as cheap in London as in the Mediterranean.

NATIONAL SOLIDARITY

One secret of their power is their mutual good understanding. Not only good minds are born among them, but all the people have good minds. — Every nation has yielded some good wit, if, as has chanced to many tribes, only one. But the intellectual organization of the English admits a communicableness of knowledge and ideas among them all. An electric touch by any of their national ideas, melts them into one family, and brings the hoards of power which their individuality is always hiving (2), into use and play for all. Is it the smallness of the country, or is it the pride and affection of race, — they have solidarity, or responsibleness, and trust in each other.

Their minds, like wool, admit of a dye which is more lasting than the cloth. They embrace their cause with more tenacity than their life. Though not military, yet every common subject by the poll is fit to make a soldier of. These private, reserved, mute family-men can adopt a public end with all their heat,

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(1) *Comte de Lauraguais* (1733-1824).
(2) *To hive :* to house, to contain (like bees in a hive).

and this strength of affection makes the romance of their heroes. The difference of rank does not divide the national heart.

A great ability, not amassed on a few giants, but poured into the general mind, so that each of them could at a pinch (1) stand in the shoes of the other ; and they are more bound in character, than differenced in ability or in rank. The labourer is a possible lord. The lord is a possible basket-maker. Every man carries the English system in his brain, knows what is confided to him, and does therein the best he can. The chancellor carries England on his mace (2), the midshipman at the point of his dirk (3), the smith on his hammer, the cook in the bowl of his spoon ; the postilion cracks his whip for England, and the sailor times his oars to « God save the King ! » The very felons have their pride in each other's English stanchness. In politics and in war, they hold together as by hooks of steel.

IV. MANNERS

PLUCK

I FIND the Englishman to be him of all men who stands firmest in his shoes. They have in themselves what they value in their horses, mettle (4) and bottom. On the day of my arrival at Liverpool, a gentleman, in describing to me the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, happened to say, « Lord Clarendon has pluck (5) like a cock, and will fight till he dies ; » and, what I heard first I heard last, and the one thing the English value is pluck. The cabmen have it ; the merchants have it ; the bishops have it ; the women have it ; the journals have it ; the Times newspaper, they say, is the pluckiest thing in England.

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(1) *At a pinch :* in case of need.
(2) *Mace :* staff of office, generally made of metal.
(3) *Dirk :* kind of dagger.
(4) *Mettle :* natural ardour, spirit.
(5) *Pluck :* moral courage.

They require you to dare to be of your own opinion, and they hate the practical cowards who cannot in affairs answer directly yes or no. They dare to displease, nay, they will let you break all the commandments (1), if you do it natively (2), and with spirit. You must be somebody ; then you may do this or that, as you will.

The Englishman is very petulant and precise about his accommodation at inns, and on the roads ; a quiddle (3) about his toast and his chop, and every species of convenience, and loud and pungent (4) in his expressions of impatience at any neglect. His vivacity betrays itself, at all points, in his manners, in his respiration, and the inarticulate noises he makes in clearing the throat ; — all significant of burly strength. He has stamina (5), he can take the initiative in emergencies. He has that *aplomb*, which results from a good adjustment of the moral and physical nature and the obedience of all the powers to the will ; as if the axes of his eyes were united to his backbone, and only moved with the trunk.

INDIFFERENCE

This vigour appears in the incuriosity, and stony neglect, each of every other. Each man walks, eats, drinks, shaves, dresses, gesticulates, and, in every manner, acts and suffers without reference to the bystanders, in his own fashion (A) ; only careful not to interfere with them, or annoy them ; not that he is

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(1) *The commandments :* the ten commandments in the Bible, the Decalogue.

(2) *Natively :* artlessly, naïvely.

(3) *Quiddle :* a person who wastes his time over trifling details.

(4) *Pungent :* sharp, bitter.

(5) *Stamina :* power of endurance.

(A) « They walk straight, with a geometrical movement, without looking on either hand ; without distraction, wholly given up to their business, like automatons, each moved by a spring. » (H. TAINE, *Notes on England*). — « They are not

really occupied with his own affair, and does not think of them. Every man in this polished country consults only his convenience. I know not where any personal eccentricity is so freely allowed, and no man gives himself any concern with it (A). An Englishman walks in a pouring rain, swinging his closed umbrella like a walking-stick ; wears a wig, or a shawl, or a saddle, or stands on his head, and no remark is made. And as he has been doing this for several generations, it is now in the blood.

In short, every one of these islanders is an island himself, safe, tranquil, incommunicable. In a company of strangers, you would think him deaf : his eyes never wander from his table and newspaper. He is never betrayed into any curiosity or unbecoming emotion. They have all been trained in one severe school of manners, and never put off the harness. He does not give his hand. He does not let you meet his eye. It is almost an affront to look a man in the face, without being introduced. In mixed or in select companies they do not introduce persons ; so that a presentation is a circumstance as valid as a contract. Introductions are sacraments. He withholds his name. At the hotel he is hardly willing to whisper it to the clerk at the book-office. If he give you his private address on a card, it is like an avowal of friendship ; and his bearing, on being introduced, is cold, even though he is seeking your acquaintance, and is studying how he shall serve you (B).

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much troubled about the opinions which people may have of them, nor do they take much notice of what the others do.» (B. DE MURALT, *Letter* I).

(A) « The English have but little dependence on the public in their way of living, nor will they be slaves to custom. They indulge their inclinations and please themselves with wishing for things that are extraordinary. They have courage enough to thwart common opinion and the crowd, and even pass for fools when 'tis necessary, which is a great step to become truly reasonable. » (B. DE MURALT, *Letter* III).

(B) « My friend B —, on being introduced to a family, paid a visit to the lady. Her husband arrives, notices him, walks silently across the room, sits down, and after the lapse of a minute says. « Glad to see you, Sir. » Nothing more. » (H. TAINE, *Notes on England*). — « 'Tis matter of

They are positive, methodical, cleanly, and formal, loving routine, and conventional ways ; loving truth and religion, to be sure, but inexorable on points of form. All the world praises the comfort and private appointments of an English inn, and of English households. You are sure of neatness and of personal decorum. A Frenchman may possibly be clean ; an Englishman is conscientiously clean. A certain order and complete propriety is found in his dress and in his belongings.

LOVE OF HOME

Born in a harsh and wet climate, which keeps him indoors whenever he is at rest, and being of an affectionate and loyal temper, he dearly loves his house. If he is rich, he buys a demesne, and builds a hall (1) ; if he is in middle condition, he spares no expense in his house. Without, it is all planted : within, it is wainscoted (2), carved, curtained, hung with pictures, and filled with good furniture. 'Tis a passion, which survives all others, to deck (3) and improve it. Hither he brings all that is rare and costly, and with the national tendency to sit fast in the same spot for many generations, it comes to be, in the course of time, a museum of heirlooms (4), gifts, and trophies of the adventures and exploits of the family. He is very fond of silver plate, and, though he have no gallery of portraits of his ancestors, he has of (5) their punchbowls and porringers. Incredible amounts of plate are found in good houses, and the poorest have some spoon or saucepan, gift of a godmother, saved out of better times.

An English family consists of a few persons, who, from youth to age, are found revolving within a few

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concern to a man to see these people so little communicative and so harsh to strangers that court them. This is one of the great faults they are reproached with. » (B. DE MURALT, *Letter* IV).

(1) *Hall :* a large country house.
(2) *Wainscot :* Fr. lambris.
(3) *Deck :* to decorate.
(4) *Heirlooms :* inherited articles.
(5) *He has* (a gallery) *of* .. —

feet of each other, as if tied by some invisible ligature, tense as that cartilage which we have seen attaching the two Siamese. England produces under favourable conditions of ease and culture the finest women in the world. And as the men are affectionate and true-hearted, the women inspire and refine them. Nothing can be more delicate without being fantastical, nothing more firm and based in nature and sentiment, than the courtship and mutual carriage (1) of the sexes. A song of 1596 says, « The wife of every Englishman is counted (2) blest. »

CONSERVATISM

They keep their old customs, costumes, and pomps, their wig and mace, sceptre and crown. The middle ages still lurk (3) in the streets of London. The Knights of the Bath (4) take oath to defend injured ladies; the gold-stick-in-waiting survives. They repeated the ceremonies of the eleventh century in the coronation of the present Queen (3). A hereditary tenure is natural to them. Offices, farms, trades, and traditions descend so. Their leases run for a hundred and a thousand years. Terms of service and partnership are life-long, or are inherited. Antiquity of usage is sanction enough.

The English power resides also in their dislike of change. They have difficulty in bringing their reason to act, and on all occasions use their memory first. As soon as they have rid themselves of some grievance, and settled the better practice, they make haste to fix it as a finality, and never wish to hear of alteration more.

Every Englishman is an embryonic chancellor. His instinct is to search for a precedent. The favourite phrase of their law is, « a custom whereof the memory

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(1) *Carriage :* behaviour.
(2) *Counted :* considered.
(3) *To lurk :* to be latent ; to lie hidden.
(4) *The Bath :* an order of knighthood instituted in 1399, thus named from the bath preceding installation.
(5) *Queen* Victoria, crowned in 1837.

of man runneth (1) not back to the contrary. » The barons say, « *Nolumus mutari ;* » and the cockneys stifle the curiosity of the foreigner on the reason of any practice, with, « Lord, sir, it was always so ! » They hate innovation. Bacon told them, Time was the right reformer ; Chatham, that « confidence was a plant of slow growth ; » Canning, to « advance with the times ; » and Wellington, that « habit was ten times nature. » All their statesmen learn the irresistibility of the tide of custom, and have invented many fine phrases to cover this slowness of perception, and prehensility of tail.

ENGLISH DINNERS

In an aristocratical country, like England, not the Trial by Jury, but the dinner, is the capital institution. It is the mode of doing honour to a stranger, to invite him to eat — and has been for many hundred years. « And they think, » says the Venetian traveller of 1500, « no greater honour can be conferred or received, than to invite others to eat with them, or to be invited themselves, and they would sooner give five or six ducats to provide an entertainment for a person, than a groat to assist him in any distress. » It is reserved to the end of the day, the family hour being generally six, in London, and if any company is expected, one or two hours later. Every one dresses for dinner, in his own house, or in another man's. The guests are expected to arrive within half an hour of the time fixed by card of invitation, and nothing but death or mutilation is permitted to detain them. The company sit one or two hours, before the ladies leave the table. The gentlemen remain over their wine an hour longer, and rejoin the ladies in the drawing-room, and take coffee. The dress-dinner generates a talent of table-talk which reaches great perfection : the stories are so good, that one is sure they must have been often told before, to have got such happy turns. Hither come all manner of clever projects, bits of popular science, of practical invention, of miscel-

(1) *Runneth*, archaïc form of *runs*.

laneous humour ; political, literary, and personal news ; railroads, horses, diamonds, agriculture, horticulture, pisciculture, and wine (A).

V. TRUTH

BLUNTNESS

Their practical power rests on their national sincerity. Veracity derives from instinct, and marks superiority in organization. They are blunt in saying what they think, sparing of promises, and they require plain-dealing of others. We will not have to do with a man in a mask. Let us know the truth. Draw a straight line, hit whom and where it will. Alfred (1), whom the affection of the nation makes the type of their race, is called by a writer of the Norman Conquest, the *truth-speaker : Alveredus veridicus.*

To be king of their word, is their pride. When they unmask cant, they say, « The English of this is, » etc. ; and to give the lie (2) is the extreme insult. The phrase of the lowest of the people is « honour-bright, » and their vulgar praise, « his word is as good as his bond (3). » They hate shuffling (4) and equivocation, and the cause is damaged in the public opinion, on which any paltering can be fixed. Even Lord Chesterfield (5), with his French breeding, when he came to define a gentleman, declared that truth made his distinction ; and nothing ever spoken by him would find so hearty a suffrage from his nation. The

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(A) « The English make better after-dinner speeches than we do. Some of them may be read every week in the newspapers. » (H. TAINE, *Notes on England.*)

(1) King *Alfred*, a famous Anglo-Saxon King, (849-901).
(2) *To give the lie :* to prove the falseness of a person's statement.
(3) *Bond :* written promise.
(4) *Shuffling :* evasion from the point considered.
(5) *Lord Chesterfield :* a nobleman and writer of the XVIIIth century.

Duke of Wellington, who had the best right to say so, advises the French General Kellermann, that he may rely on the parole of an English officer. The English, of all classes, value themselves on this trait, as distinguishing them from the French, who, in the popular belief, are more polite than true. An Englishman understates, avoids the superlative, checks himself in compliments, alleging, that in the French language, one cannot speak without lying (1).

They love reality in wealth, power, hospitality, and do not easily learn to make a show, and take the world as it goes. They are not fond of ornaments, and if they wear them, they must be gems. They have the earth-hunger, or preference for property in land, which is said to mark the Teutonic nations. They build of stone ; public and private buildings are massive and durable. Plain rich clothes, plain rich equipage, plain rich finish throughout their house and belongings, mark the English truth.

PROBITY

They confide in each other — English believes in English. The French feel the superiority of this probity. The Englishman is not springing a trap (1) for his admiration, but is honestly minding his business. The Frenchman is vain. Madame de Stael says that the English irritated Napoleon, mainly because they have found out how to unite success with honesty. They are tenacious of their belief, and cannot easily change their opinions to suit the hour. They are like ships with too much head on (2) to come quickly about (3) ; nor will prosperity or even adversity be allowed to shake their habitual view of conduct. Whilst I was in London, M. Guizot arrived there on his escape from Paris, in February, 1848. Many pri-

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(1) « A slashing journal affirms that no one can speak French without lying ; the tongue exaggerates. » (H. TAINE, *Notes on England*).

(1) *To spring a trap* : to lay it, to arrange its springs.
(2) *Head* : speed.
(3) *To come about* : to turn round.

vate friends called on him. His name was immediately proposed as an honorary member of the Athenæum. M. Guizot was blackballed. Certainly, they knew the distinction of his name. But the Englishman is not fickle. He had really made up his mind, now for years, as he read his newspaper, to hate and despise M. Guizot ; and the altered position of the man as an illustrious exile, and a guest in the country, makes no difference to him.

They require the same adherence, through conviction and reality, in public men.

They have a horror of adventurers, in or out of Parliament. The ruling passion of Englishmen, in these days, is, a terror of humbug (1). In the same proportion they value honesty, stoutness, and adherence to your own. They like a man committed (2) to his objects. They hate the French, as frivolous ; they hate the Irish, as aimlesss ; they hate the Germans, as professors (3).

SLUGGISHNESS AND STOLIDITY

A slow temperament makes them less rapid and ready than other countrymen, and has given occasion to the observation, that English wit comes afterwards — which the French denote as *esprit d'escalier*. This dulness makes their attachment to home, and their adherence in all foreign countries to home habits. The Englishman who visits Mount Etna, will carry his tea-kettle to the top. The old Italian author of the « Relation of England » (in 1500), says, « I have it on the best information, that when the war is actually raging most furiously, they will seek for good eating, and all their other comforts, without thinking what harm might befall them (A). » Then their eyes seem to be set at the bottom of a tunnel, and they affirm the one small fact they know, with the best faith in the

(1) *Humbug :* hoax, cheat, falseness.
(2) *Committed :* attached ; given up.
(3) *Professors :* pedantic professors.

(A) The above remark was, to a certain extent, curiously verified during the last great war.

world that nothing else exists. And, as their own belief in guineas is perfect, they readily, on all occasions, apply the pecuniary argument as final. Thus when the Rochester rappings (1) began to be heard of in England, a man deposited £100 in a sealed box in the Dublin Bank, and then advertised in the newspapers to all sommambulists, mesmerizers (2), and others, that whoever could tell him the number of his note, should have the money. He let it lie there six months, the newspapers now and then, at his instance, stimulating the attention of the adepts ; but none could ever tell him ; and he said, « Now let me never be bothered more with this proven lie ». It is told of a good Sir John, that he heard a case stated by counsel, and made up his mind ; then the counsel for the other side taking their turn to speak, he found himself so unsettled and perplexed, that he exclaimed, « So help me God ! I will never listen to evidence again. » Any number of dellightful examples of this English stolidity (3) are the anecdotes of Europe. I knew a very worthy man — a magistrate, I believe he was, in the town of Derby — who went to the Opera, to see Malibran (4). In one scene, the heroine was to rush across a ruined bridge. Mr. B. arose, and mildly, yet firmly, called the attention of the audience and the performers to the fact, that, in his judgment, the bridge was unsafe ! This English stolidity contrasts with French wit and tact. The French, it is commonly said, have greatly more influence in Europe than the English. What influence the English have is by brute force of wealth and power ; that of the French by affinity and talent.

(1) *Rappings* of ghosts.
(2) *Mesmerizer :* a hypnotist, a man who professes to possess animal magnetism.
(3) *Stolidity :* dulness, stupidity.
(4) *Malibran*, a famous French singer (1808-1836), celebrated by A. de Musset.

VI. CHARACTER

ALLEGED MOROSENESS

THE English race are reputed morose. I do not know that they have sadder brows than their neighbours of northern climates. They are sad by comparison with the singing and dancing nations : not sadder, but slow and staid, as finding their joys at home. They, too, believe that where there is no enjoyment of life, there can be no vigour and art in speech or thought ; that your merry heart goes all the way, your sad one tires in a mile. This trait of gloom has been fixed on them by French travellers, who, from Froissart, Voltaire, Le Sage (1), Mirabeau, down to the lively journalists of the *feuilletons*, have spent their wit on the solemnity of their neighbours. The French say, gay conversation is unknown in their island (A). The Englishman finds no relief from reflection, except in reflection. When he wishes for amusement, he goes to work (B). His hilarity is like an attack of fever. Religion, the theatre, and the reading the books of his country, all feed and increase his natural melancholy. The police does not interfere with public diversions. It thinks itself bound in duty to respect the pleasures and rare gaiety of this inconsolable nation ; and their well-known courage is entirely attributable to their disgust of life (C).

I suppose their gravity of demeanour and their few

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(1) *Le Sage* de la Colombière, who in 1715 published an account of his travels in England.

(A) Cf : « So far as I can judge, the English do not know how to amuse themselves by means of conversation. » (H. TAINE, *Notes on England*).

(B) Cf : « The conversation indulged in is chiefly instructive ; here, nothing is to be found except conscientious labour and useful production. » (H. TAINE, *Notes on England*).

(C) « The English die by their own hands with as much indifference as by another's. » (B. DE MURALT, *Letter* III).

words have obtained this reputation. As compared with the Americans, I think them cheerful and contented. The English have a mild aspect, and a ringing, cheerful voice. They are large-natured, and not so easily amused as the southerners, and are among them as grown people among children, requiring war, or trade, or engineering, or science, instead of frivolous games (A). They are proud and private, and, even if disposed to recreation, will avoid an open garden. They sported sadly ; *ils s'amusaient tristement selon la coutume de leur pays*, saïd Froissart (B) ; and, I suppose, never nation built their party-walls so thick, or their garden-fences so high. Meat and wine produce no effect on them : they are just as cold, quiet, and composed, at the end, as at the beginning of dinner.

TACITURNITY

The reputation of taciturnity they have enjoyed for six or seven hundred years ; and a kind of pride in bad public speaking is noted in the House of Commons, as if they were willing to show that they did not live by their tongues, or thought they spoke well enough if they had the tone of gentlemen. In mixed company they shut their mouths. A Yorkshire mill-owner told me he had ridden more than once all the way from London to Leeds, in the first-class carriage, with the same persons, and no word exchanged. The club-houses were established to cultivate social habits, and it is rare that more than two eat together, and oftenest one eats alone.

They are contradictorily described as sour, splen-

(A) « Cold in manner, sober and quiet by temperament, of a shy and melancholy disposition, the Englishman is less lovable and less happy than the French. » (MAX O'RELL (Paul Blouet), *John Bull and his Island*).

(B) « The other day, I witnessed a game of cricket... ; seven or eight English boys were pitching the ball. Yet, during upwards of an hour and a half there was not a single cry, not a single remark made in a loud voice. » (H. TAINE, *Notes on England*).

etic (1), and stubborn — and as mild, sweet, and sensible. The truth is, they have great range and variety of character. They are good lovers, good haters, slow but obstinate admirers, and, in all things, very much steeped (2) in their temperament, like men hardly awaked from deep sleep, which (3) they enjoy. Their habits and instincts cleave (4) to nature. They are of the earth, earthy ; and of the sea, as the sea-kinds, attached to it for what it yields them, and not from any sentiment.

They do not wear their heart on their sleeve for daws to peck at (5). They have that phlegm or staidness, which it is a compliment to disturb. « Great men, » said Aristotle, « are always of a nature originally melancholy. » They dare to displease, they do not speak to expectation (6). They like the sayers of No, better than the sayers of Yes. Each of them has an opinion which he feels it becomes him to express all the more that it differs from yours. They are meditating opposition. This gravity is inseparable from minds of great resources.

RETRIEVING POWER

They have great range of scale, from ferocity to exquisite refinement. With larger scale, they have great retrieving (7) power. After running each tendency to an extreme they try another tack (8) with equal heat. More intellectual than other races, when they live with other races, they do not take their language but bestow their own. They subsidize other nations, and are not subsidized. They proselyte, and are not proselyted. They assimilate other races to themselves, and

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(1) *Splenetic :* choleric.
(2) *Steeped :* deeply sunk.
(3) *Which :* a condition which.
(4) *To cleave :* to adhere, to cling.
(5) *To wear one's heart,* etc. : to be foolishly generous ; to be a gull ; (This saying is quoted by Shakespeare in *Othello,* Act. I, sc. I).
(6) *To expectation :* conformably to what people expect.
(7) *To retrieve :* to repair, to set right.
(8) *Tack :* course of action, policy.

are not assimilated. The English did not calculate the conquest of the Indies. It fell to their character. So they administer in different parts of the world the codes of every empire and race ; in Canada, old French law ; in the Mauritius, the Code Napoleon ; in the West Indies, the edicts of the Spanish Cortes ; in the East Indies, the Laws of Menu (1) ; in the Isle of Man, of the scandinavian Thing ; at the Cape of Good Hope, of the old Netherlands ; and in the Ionian Islands, the Pandects of Justinian.

They are very conscious of their advantageous position in history. England is the lawgiver, the patron, the instructor, the ally. Compare the tone of the French and of the English press : the first, querulous, captious, sensitive about English opinion ; the English press is never timorous about French opinion, but arrogant and contemptuous.

They are testy (2) and headstrong, through an excess of will and bias ; churlish (3) as men sometimes please to be who do not forget a debt, who ask no favours, and who will do what they like with their own. With education and intercourse, these asperities wear off, and leave the good-will pure. Nothing savage, nothing mean resides in the English heart. They are subject to panics of credulity and of rage, but the temper of the nation, however disturbed, settles itself soon and easily, as in this temperate zone, the sky, after whatever storms, clears again, and serenity is its normal condition.

The national temper, in the civil history, is not flashy (5) or whiffling (6). The slow, deep English mass smoulders (7) with fire, which at last sets all its borders in flame. The wrath of London is not French wrath, but has a long memory, and in its hottest heat, a register (8) and rule.

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(1) *Menu :* Fr. « Manou » ; one of the sacred writers of India.
(2) *Testy :* touchy, irritable.
(3) *Headstrong :* stubborn, obstinate.
(4) *Churlish :* rude.
(5) *Flashy :* bright and short-lived.
(6) *Whiffling :* fickle, changeable.
(7) *To smoulder :* to burn slowly, without a flame.
(8) *Register :* a regulating power.

Half their strength they put not forth. They are capable of a sublime resolution, and if hereafter the war of races, often predicted, and making itself a war of opinions also (a question of despotism and liberty coming from Eastern Europe), should menace the English civilization, these sea-kings may take once again to their floating castles, and find a new home and a second millennium of power in their colonies (1).

The stability of England is the security of the modern world. If the English race were as mutable as the French, what reliance ? But the English stand for liberty. The conservative, money-loving, lord-loving English are yet liberty-loving ; and so freedom is safe : for they have more personal force than any other people. The nation always resist the immoral action of their government. They think humanely on the affairs of France, of Turkey, of Poland, of Hungary, though overborne (2) by the statecraft (3) of the rulers at last.

VII. COCKAYNE (4)

INDIVIDUALISM

The English are a nation of humourists (5). Individual right is pushed to the uttermost bound compatible with public order (A). Property is so perfect, that it seems the craft of that race, and not to exist elsewhere. The king cannot step on an acre which the

(1) A prediction which came true in 1914.
(2) *To overbear :* to subdue, to overpower.
(3) *Statecraft :* political skill.
(4) *Cockayne*, (generally : *Cockaigne*, from the French : *Cocagne*) ; an imaginary land of idleness and luxury. Hence : *Cockneydom*, *i. e.* London and its suburbs ; the *Cockneys*, the Londoners ; « Mr. Cockayne.»
(5) *Humourists :* people indulging in their individual humours, or whims : eccentrics ; egotists ; individualists.

(A) « Bien des gens qui ne se soucient de plaire à personne, s'abandonnent à leur humeur. » (MONTESQUIEU, *Esprit des Lois*, XIX, ch. XXVII).

peasant refuses to sell. A testator endows a dog or a rookery, and Europe cannot interfere with his absurdity. Every individual has his particular way of living, which he pushes to folly, and the decided sympathy of his compatriots is engaged to back up Mr. Crump's whim by statutes, and chancellors, and horse-guards. There is no freak so ridiculous but some Englishman has attempted to immortalize by money and law. British citizenship is as omnipotent as Roman was (A). Mr. Cockayne is very sensible of this. The pursy man means by freedom the right to do as he pleases, and does wrong in order to feel his freedom, and makes a conscience of persisting in it.

NATIONAL PRIDE

He is intensely patriotic, for his country is so small. His confidence in the power and performance of his nation makes him provokingly incurious (1) about other nations. He dislikes foreigners. Swedenborg, (2) who lived much in England, notes « the similitude of minds among the English, in consequence of which they contract familiarity with friends who are of that nation, and seldom with others : and they regard foreigners, as one looking through a telescope from the top of a palace regards those who dwell or wander about out of the city ». A much older traveller, the Venitian who wrote the « Relation of England, » in 1500, says : — « The English are great lovers of themselves, and of everything belonging to them. They think that there are no other men than themselves, and no other world but England ; and, whenever they see a handsome foreigner, they say he looks like an Englishman : and whenever they partake of any delicacy with a foreigner, they ask him

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(A) Cf. « An English merchant presumes (not without some reason) to compare himself to a Roman citizen. » (VOLTAIRE, *Letters concerning the English Nation*).

(1) *Incurious :* indifferent.

(2(*Swedenborg* (1688-1772), a Swedish writer about religious and mystic topics.

whether such a thing is made in his country. » (A) When he adds epithets of praise, his climax is « so English ; » and when he wishes to pay you the highest compliment, he says, I should not know you from an Englishman. I have found that Englishmen have such a good opinion of England, that the ordinary phrases, in all good society, of postponing (1) or disparaging (2) one's own things in talking with a stranger, are seriously mistaken by them for an insuppressible (3) homage to the merits of their nation.

In short, I am afraid that English nature is so rank (4) and aggressive as to be a little incompatible with every other. The world is not wide enough for two.

But, beyond this nationality, it must be admitted the island offers a daily worship to the old Norse god Brage (5), celebrated among our Scandinavian forefathers for his eloquence and majestic air. The English have a steady courage, that fits them for great attempts and endurance : they have also a petty (6) courage, through which every man delights in showing himself for what he is, and in doing what he can : so that, in all companies, each of them has too good an opinion of himself to imitate anybody. He hides no defect of his form, features, dress, connection (7), or birthplace, for he thinks every circumstance belonging to him comes recommended to you. If one of them have a bald, or a red, or a green head, or bow (8) legs, or a scar, or mark, or a paunch (9),

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(A) « They love themselves best. They are strongly prepossessed in favour of their own nation. This influences all their discourses and ways. » (B. DE MURALT, *Letter* I).

(1) *To postpone :* to put off, to adjourn.
(2) *To disparage :* to compare with something of lower worth.
(3) *Insuppressible :* irrepressible.
(4) *Rank :* high and strong.
(5) *Brage*, or *Bragi :* a Scandinavian deity, son of Odin and Frigga, the god of eloquence and poetry.
(6) *Petty :* inferior, minor.
(7) *Connection :* family and relatives.
(8) *Bow :* curved.
(9) *Paunch :* belly, big stomach.

or a squeaking or a raven voice, he has persuaded himself that there is something modish and becoming in it, and that it sits well on him.

An English lady on the Rhine, hearing a German speaking of her party as foreigners, exclaimed, « No, we are not foreigners ; we are English ; it is you that are foreigners (A). » They tell you daily, in London, the story of the Frenchman and Englishman who quarrelled. Both were unwilling to fight, but their companions put them up to it ; at last, it was agreed that they should fight alone, in the dark, and with pistols : the candles were put out, and the Englishman, to make sure not to hit anybody, fired up the chimney, — and brought down the Frenchman. They have no curiosity about foreigners, and answer any information you may volunteer with « Oh, Oh ! » until the informant makes up his mind that they shall die in their ignorance, for any help he will offer. There are really no limits to this conceit (1), though brighter (2) men among them make painful efforts to be candid (3).

The habit of brag (4) runs through all classes, from the Times newspaper through politicians and poets, down to the boys of Eton. In the gravest treatise on political economy, in a philosophical essay, in books of science, one is surprised by the most innocent exhibition of unflinching (5) nationality. In a tract on Corn (6), a most amiable and accomp-

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(A) M. Marcel PRÉVOST writing about Biarritz, says « A few hundreds of English people, obstinately speaking nothing but English, inhabiting only English lodgings, dressing only in the English fashion, practising their religion, their sports and their games with an easy ostentation, end by persuading us that *we* are the strangers or at least the conquered nation ! » (Quoted by C. F. G. MASTERMAN, in *The Condition of England*).

(1) *Conceit :* idea.
(2) *Bright :* clever, intelligent.
(3) *Candid :* sincere.
(4) *Brag :* boasting.
(5) *Unflinching :* undaunted, resolute.
(6) *A tract* written at the time of the Anti Corn Law movement (1845-1846).

lished gentleman writes thus : — « Though Britain, according to Bishop Berkeley's (1) idea, were surrounded by a wall of brass ten thousand cubits in height, still she would as far excel the rest of the globe in riches, as she now does, both in this secondary quality, and in the more important ones of freedom, virtue, and science. »

But this childish patriotism costs something, like all narrowness. The English sway (2) of their colonies has no root of kindness. They govern by their arts and ability, they are more just than kind ; and, whenever an abatement of their power is felt, they have not conciliated the affection on which to rely.

VIII. WEALTH

RESPECT FOR WEALTH

There is no country in which so absolute a homage is paid to wealth (A). The Englishman has pure pride in his wealth, and esteems it a final certificate. A coarse logic rules throughout all English souls ; — if you have merit, can you not show it by your good clothes, and coach, and horses ? How can a man be a gentleman without a pipe of wine ? They do not wish to be represented except by opulent men. An Englishman who has lost his fortune, is said to have died of a broken heart. The last term of insult is « a beggar. » Nelson said, « the want of fortune is a crime which I can never get over. » Sydney Smith (3) said, « poverty is infamous in England. »

You shall find this sentiment, if not so frankly put, yet deeply implied, in the novels and romances of

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(1) George *Berkeley*, an English metaphysician (1685-1753).
(2) *Sway* : domination.

(A) « L'argent est ici souverainement estimé. » (Montesquieu, *Notes sur l'Angleterre*).

(3) *Sydney Smith*, an essayist and writer on political and economical subjects, 1771-1845.

the present (1) century, and not only in these, but in biography, and in the votes of public assemblies, in the tone of the preaching, and in the table-talk. The respect for truth of facts in England is equalled only by the respect for wealth. It is at once the pride of art of the Saxon, as he is a wealth-maker, and his passion for independence (A). The Englishman believes that every man must take care of himself, and has himself to thank, if he do not mend (2) his condition. To pay their debts is their national point of honour. From the Exchequer (3) and the East India House (4) to the huckster's (5) shop, everything prospers, because it is solvent (6). The British armies are solvent, and pay for what they take. The British empire is solvent ; for, in spite of the huge national debt, the valuation mounts (B). During the war from 1789 to 1815, whilst they complained that they were taxed within an inch of their lives, and, by dint of enormous taxes, were subsidizing all the continent against France, the English were growing rich every year faster than any people ever grew before. It is their maxim, that the weight of taxes must be calculated not by what is taken, but by what is left (C). Solvency is in the ideas and mechanism of an Englishman.

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(1) I. e. the nineteenth ; especially in works of the Victorian era.

(A) « Cette nation aime prodigieusement sa liberté. » (MONTESQUIEU, *L'Esprit des Lois*, XIX, chap. XXVII).

(2) *To mend :* to better, to improve.

(3) *Exchequer :* the central administration of national finances.

(4) *East India House :* central administration of Indian affairs.

(5) *Huckster :* seller of small, worthless articles.

(6) *Solvent :* able to pay one's debts.

(B) « Elle a un crédit sûr, parce qu'elle emprunte à elle-même et se paye elle-même. » (MONTESQUIEU, *ibid*).

(C) « Pour défendre (sa liberté), cette nation sacrifie son bien, son aisance, ses intérêts ; elle se charge des impôts les plus durs et tels que le prince le plus absolu n'oserait les faire supporter à ses sujets. » (MONTESQUIEU, *ibid*).

ECONOMY

They are contented with slower steamers, as long as they know that swifter boats lose money. They proceed logically by the double method of labour and thrift. Every household exhibits an exact economy, and nothing of that uncalculated headlong (1) expenditure which families use in America. If they cannot pay, they do not buy ; for they have no presumption of better fortunes next year, as Americans have ; and they say without shame, *I cannot afford it.* Gentlemen do not hesitate to ride in the second-class cars, or in the second cabin. An economist, or a man who can proportion his means and his ambition or bring the year round with expenditure which expresses his character (2), without embarrassing one day of his future, is already a master of life, and a freeman. Lord Burleigh writes to his son, « that one ought never to devote more than two-thirds of his (3) income to the ordinary expenses of life, since the extraordinary will be certain to absorb the other third. »

FEELING OF PROPERTY

With this power of creation, and this passion for independence, property has reached an ideal perfection. It is felt and treated as the national life-blood. The laws are framed to give property the securest possible basis, and the provisions to lock and transmit it have exercised the cunningest heads in a profession which never admits a fool. The rights of property nothing but felony and treason can override (4). The house is a castle which the king cannot enter. The Bank is a strong box to which the king has no key. Whatever surly sweetness possession can give, is tasted in England to the dregs. Vested (5) rights are awful things, and absolute possession gives the smallest

(1) *Headlong :* rash, inconsiderate.
(2) *Character :* social position.
(3) *His :* one's.
(4) *To override :* to trample down.
(5) *Vested :* fixed. — *To vest :* to take effect.

freeholder identity of interest with the duke. High stone fences and padlocked garden gates announce the absolute will of the owner to be alone. Every whim of exaggerated egotism is put into stone and iron, into silver and gold, with costly deliberation and detail.

An Englishman hears that the Queen Dowager wishes to establish some claim to put her park paling a rod (1) forward into his grounds, so as to get a coachway, and save her a mile to the avenue. Instantly he transforms his paling into stone-masonry, solid as the walls of Cuma, and all Europe cannot prevail on him to sell or compound for an inch of the land.

ENGLISH SOVEREIGNTY

But the proudest result of this creation has been the great and refined forces it has put at the disposal of the private citizen. In the social world, an Englishman to-day has the best lot. He is a king in a plain coat. He goes with the most powerful protection, keeps the best company, is armed by the best education, is seconded by wealth ; and his English name and accidents are like a flourish of trumpets announcing him. This, with his quiet style of manners, gives him the power of a sovereign, without the inconveniences which belong to that rank. I much prefer the condition of an English gentleman of the better class, to that of any potentate in Europe — whether for travel, or for opportunity of society, or for access to means of science or study, or for mere comfort and easy, healthy relation to people at home (A).

IX. EDUCATION

It is contended (2) by those who have been bred

(1) *Rod :* a measure of five yeards and a half.

(A) Cf. VOLTAIRE'S *Letters concerning the English nation* ; (Letter X) ; also MONTESQUIEU : « Les lois n'y étant pas faites pour un particulier plus que pour un autre, chacun se regarde comme monarque. » (*L'Esprit des Lois*, XIX, ch. XXVII).

(2) *To contend :* to argue.

at Eton, Harrow, Rugby, and Westminster (1), that the public sentiment within each of those schools is high-toned and manly ; that in their playgrounds courage is universally admired, meanness despised, manly feelings and generous conduct are encouraged (A) : that an unwritten code of honour deals to the spoiled child of rank, and to the child of upstart (2) wealth, an even-handed (3) justice purges their nonsense out of both, and does all that can be done to make them gentlemen (B).

Again, at the universities, it is urged, that all goes to form what England values as the flower of its national life, — a well-educated gentleman. The German Huber, in describing to his countrymen the attributes of an English gentleman, frankly admits that, « in Germany, we have nothing of the kind. A gentleman must possess a political character, an independent and public position, or, at least, the right of assuming it. He must have average opulence, either of his own, or in his family. He should also have bodily activity and strength, unattainable by our sedentary life in public offices. The race of English gentlemen presents an appearance of manly vigour and form, not elsewhere to be found among an equal number of persons. No other nation produces the stock. And in England, it has deteriorated. The university is a decided presumption (4) in any man's favour. And so eminent are the members that a glance at the

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(1) *Eton, ... Westminster :* four of the most famous Public Schools in England.

(A) « They have initiative and responsability ; it is curious to see youths of twelve elevated to the dignity of men... Science and mental culture occupy the last place ; character, heart, courage, strength, and bodily skill are in the first row. » (TAINE, *Notes on England*, chap. IX).

(2) *Upstart :* suddenly raised, « parvenu ».

(3) *Even-handed ;* equitable.

(B) « What is my son sent to school for? — If he'll only turn out a brave, helpful, truth — telling Englishman, and a gentleman, and a Christian, that's all I want. » (T. HUGHES, *Tom Brown's Schooldays*).

(4) *A presumption :* a strong probability.

calendars (1) whill show that in all the world one cannot be in better company than on the books of one of the larger Oxford or Cambridge colleges. »

These seminaries are finishing schools for the upper classes, and not for the poor. The useful is exploded (2). The definition of a public school is « a school which excludes all that could fit a man for standing behind a counter. »

X. RELIGION

THE CHARACTER OF ENGLISH RELIGION

The religion of England is part of good-breeding. When you see on the continent the well-dressed Englishman come into his ambassador's chapel, and put his face for silent prayer into his smooth-brushed hat, one cannot help feeling how much national pride prays with him, and the religion of a gentleman. So far is he from attaching any meaning to the words, that he believes himself to have done almost the generous thing, and that it is very condescending in him to pray to God. A great duke said, on the occasion of a victory, in the House of Lords, that he thought the Almighty God had not been well used by them, and that it would become their magnanimity, after so great successes, to take order that a proper acknowledgment be made. It is the church of the gentry ; but it is not the church of the poor. The operatives (3) do not own it, and gentlemen lately testified in the House of Commons that in their lives they never saw a poor man in a ragged coat inside a church.

The torpidity on the side of religion of the vigorous English understanding, shows how much wit and folly can agree in one brain. Their religion is a quotation, their church is a doll ; and any examination

(1) *Calendars :* lists of eminent personalities.
(2) *Exploded :* destroyed.
(3) *Operatives :* workmen.

is interdicted with screams of terror. In good company, you expect them to laugh at the fanaticism of the vulgar ; but they do not ; they are the vulgar.

I suspect that there is in an Englishman's brain a valve (1) that can be closed at pleasure, as an engineer shuts off steam. The most sensible and well-informed men possess the power of thinking just so far as the bishop in religious matters, and as the chancellor of the exchequer in politics (B). They talk with courage and logic, and show you magnificent results, but the same men who have brought free trade or geology to their present standing look grave and lofty, and shut down their valve, as soon as the conversation approaches the English church. After that, you talk with a box turtle (2).

The action of the university, both in what is taught, and in the spirit of the place, is directed more on producing an English gentleman, than a saint or a psychologist (C). It ripens a bishop, and extrudes a philosopher. I do not know that there is more cabalism in the Anglican, than in other churches, but the Anglican clergy are identified with the aristocracy. They say, here, that, if you talk with a clergyman, you are sure to find him well-bred, informed and candid. He entertains your thought or your project with sympathy and praise.

The Anglican church is marked by the grace and good sense of its forms, by the manly grace of its clergy. The gospel it preaches is, « By taste are ye saved. » It keeps the old structures in repair, and spends a world of money in music and building. It

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(1) *Valve :* Fr. soupape.

(B) « The English possess only partial and isolated ideas ; they do not even experience a desire to coordinate their knowledge in a sort of system. » (H. TAINE, *Notes on England*, chap. XXIX).

(2) *A box-turtle :* an American kind of turtle possessing a sort of shell-lid which it closes itself in, in case of danger.

(C) « The majority (of clergymen) have been at Oxford or Cambridge. As to their manners and externals, they are those of a gentleman, and one of independent means. » (H. TAINE, *Notes on England*, chap. XIV).

has a general good name for amenity and mildness. It is not in ordinary a persecuting church ; it is not inquisitorial, not even inquisitive, is perfectly well-bred, and can shut its eyes on all proper occasions. If you let it alone, it will let you alone. But its instinct is hostile to all change in politics, literature, or social arts. The church has not been the founder of the London University, of the Mechanics' Institutes, of the Free School, or whatever aims at diffusion of knowledge.

The doctrine of the Old Testament is the religion of England. The first leaf of the New Testament it does not open. It believes in a Providence which does not treat with levity a pound sterling. The bill for the naturalization of the Jews (in 1753) was resisted by petitions from all parts of the kingdom, and by petition from the city of London, reprobating this bill, as « tending extremely to the dishonour of the Christian religion, and extremely injurious to the interests and commerce of the kingdom in general, and of the city of London in particular. »

Nature, to be sure, had her remedy. Religious persons are driven out of the Established Church into sects, which instantly rise to credit, and hold the Establishment in check (A). Nature has sharper remedies also. The English, abhorring change in all things, abhorring it most in matters of religion, cling to the last rag of form, and are dreadfully given to cant (1). The French relinquish all that industry to them. What is so odious as the polite bows to God, in our books and newspapers ? The fanaticism and hypocrisy create satire. Punch finds an inexhaustible material.

Thackeray exposes the heartless high life. Nature revenges herself more summarily by the heathenism of the lower classes.

(A) « England is properly the country of sectarists. *Multae sunt mansiones in domo patris mei.* An Englishman, as one to whom liberty is natural, may go to heaven his own way. » (VOLTAIRE, *Letter V concerning the English Nation*).

(1) *Cant :* affected piety without sincerity.

But the religion of England, — is it the Established Church ? no ; is it the sects ? no ; they are only perpetuations of some private man's dissent, and are to the Established Church as cabs are to a coach, cheaper and more convenient, but really the same thing. Where dwells the religion ? Tell me first where dwells electricity, or motion, or thought, or gesture. They do not dwell or stay at all. Electricity cannot be made fast, mortared up and ended, like London Monument, or the Tower, so that you shall know where to find it, and keep it fixed, as the English do with their things, for evermore ; it is passing, glancing, gesticular ; it is a traveller, a newness, a surprise, a secret, which perplexes them, and puts them out. Yet, if religion be the doing of all good, and for its sake the suffering of all evil, *souffrir de tout le monde et ne faire souffrir personne*, that divine secret has existed in England from the days of Alfred (1) to those of Romilly (2), of Clarkson (3), and of Florence Nightingale (4), and in thousands who have no fame.

XI. LITERATURE

MENTAL MATERIALISM

A STRONG common sense, which it is not easy to unseat (5) or disturb, marks the English mind for a thousand years : a rude strength newly applied to thought, as of sailors and soldiers who had (6) lately

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(1) *King Alfred* (see note 1, page 38), much contributed to spread the Christian spirit in England.
(2) Sir *Samuel Romilly* (see note 1, page 20).
(3) Thomas *Clarkson* (1760-1846), an active worker against the slave trade.
(4) Miss *Florence Nightingale*, an English lady who devoted her life to benefactions and organised ambulances in the Crimea during the war (1856).
(5) *To unseat :* to displace.
(6) *Had :* should have.

learned to read. They have no fancy, and never are surprised into a covert or witty word, such as pleased the Athenians and Italians, and was convertible into a fable not long after : but they delight in strong earthy expression, not mistakable, coarsely true to the human body, and, though spoken among princes, equally fit and welcome to the mob (A). This homeliness, veracity, and plain style, appear in the earliest extant works, and in the latest. It imports into songs and ballads the smell of the earth, the breath of cattle, and, like a Dutch painter, seeks a household charm, though by pails and pans. They ask their constitutional utility in verse. The kail (1) and herrings are never out of sight. The poet nimbly (2) recovers himself from every sally of the imagination. The English muse loves the farmyard, the lane, and market. She says, with Dé Stael, « I tramp in the mire (3) with wooden shoes, whenever they would force me into the clouds. » For, the Englishman has accurate perceptions ; takes hold of things by the right end, and there is no slipperiness in his grasp. He loves the axe, the spade, the oar, the gun, the steampipe : he has built the engine he uses. He is materialist, economical, mercantile. He must be treated with sincerity and reality, with muffins (4), and not the promise of muffins ; and prefers his hot chop, with perfect security and convenience in the eating of it, to the chances of the amplest and Frenchiest bill of fare, engraved on embossed (5) paper. When he is intellectual, and a poet or philosopher, he carries the same hard truth and the same keen machinery into the mental sphere. His mind must stand on a fact. He will not be baffled (6), or catch

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(A) See H. TAINE'S *Notes on England*, chap. XXX.

(1) *Kail :* cabbage ; (cp. cauliflower).
(2) *Nimbly :* with agility.
(3) *Mire :* mud, dirt.
(4) *Muffin :* a kind of spongy tea-cake.
(5) *Embossed :* with letters in relief.
(6) *To baffle :* to perplex.

at clouds, but the mind must have a symbol palpable and resisting (A). What he relishes in Dante is the vice-like (1) tenacity with which he holds a mental image before the eyes, as if it were a scutcheon painted on a shield. Byron « liked something craggy to break his mind upon. » A taste for plain strong speech, what is called a biblical style, marks the English. It is in Alfred, and the Saxon Chronicle, and in the Sagas of the Northmen. How realistic or materialistic in treatment of his subject is Swift (2). He describes his fictitious persons as if for the police. Defoe (3) has no insecurity or choice. Hudibras (4) has the same hard mentality, — keeping the truth at once to the senses, and to the intellect.

It is not less seen in poetry. Chaucer's hard painting of his Canterbury pilgrims satisfies the senses. Shakespeare, Spencer, and Milton, in their loftiest ascents, have this national grip and exactitude of mind. This mental materialism makes the value of English transcendental genius. The Saxon materialism and narrowness, exalted into the sphere of intellect, makes the very genius of Shakespeare, and Milton. When it reaches the pure element, it treads the clouds as securely as the adamant (5). Even in its elevations, materialistic, its poetry is common sense inspired ; or iron raised to white heat.

The marriage of the two qualities is in their speech. It is a tacit rule of the language to make the frame or skeleton, of Saxon words, and, when elevation or ornament is sought, to interweave Roman ; but sparingly ; nor is a sentence made of Roman words alone, without loss of strength. The children and

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(A) « When praising the fondness of the English for facts, it must be noted that this applies to ethical as well as physical facts. » (H. TAINE, *Notes on England*, chap. XXIX).

(1) *Vice :* Fr : « étau ».

(2) *Swift :* the author of *Gulliver's Travels*.

(3) *Defoe :* the author of *Robinson Crusoe*.

(4) *Hudibras :* the hero of a famous satire in verse by Samuel Butler (1612-1680), directed against the Nonconformists.

(5) *Adamant :* diamond ; any very hard substance.

labourers use the Saxon unmixed. The Latin unmixed is abandoned to the colleges and Parliament. Mixture is a secret of the English island ; and, in their dialect, the male principle is the Saxon ; the female, the Latin ; and they are combined in every discourse. A good writer, if he has indulged in a Roman roundness, makes haste to chasten and nerve his period by English monosyllables.

There is a hygienic simpleness, rough vigour, and closeness to the matter in hand, even in the second and third class of writers ; and, I think, in the common style of the people, as one finds it in the citation of wills, letters, and public documents, in proverbs, and forms of speech. The more hearty and sturdy (3) expression may indicate that the savageness of the Norseman has not all gone. Their dynamic brains hurled off their words, as the revolving stone hurls off scraps of grit (4).

EXPERIMENTAL IDEALISM : LORD BACON

Lord Bacon has the English duality. His centuries of observations, on useful science, and his experiments. I suppose, were worth nothing. One hint of Franklin (1), or Watt (2), or Dalton (3), or Davy (4), or any one who had a talent for experiment, was worth all his lifetime of exquisite trifles. But he drinks of a diviner stream and marks the influx of idealism into England. Where that goes, is poetry, health, and progress. The rules of its genesis or its diffusion are not known. That knowledge, if we had it, would supersede (5) all that we call science of the mind. It seems an affair of race, or of meta-(6) chem-

(1) *Benjamin Franklin* (1706-1790).
(2) *J. Watt* (1736-1819), greatly improved the steam engine.
(3) *Dalton* (1766-1844), an English chemist and natural philosopher.
(4) *H. Davy* (1778-1829), the inventor of miners' safety lamps.
(5) *To supersede :* to replace.
(6) *Meta* (as in metaphysics) : that which is beyond, higher than.

istry ; — the vital point being, — how far the sense of unity, or instinct of seeking resemblances, predominated. For, wherever the mind takes a step, it is, to put itself at one with a larger class, discerned beyond the lesser class with which it has been conversant. Hence, all poetry, and all affirmative action comes.

Bacon, in the structure of his mind, held of the analogists, of the idealists, or (as we popularly say, naming from the best example) Platonists. Whoever discredits analogy, and requires heaps of facts, before any theories can be attempled, has no poetic power, and nothing original or beautiful will be produced by him. Locke (1) is as surely the influx of decomposition and of prose, as Bacon and the Platonists, of growth. The Platonic is the poetic tendency ; the so-called scientific is the negative and poisonous. 'Tis quite certain, that Spenser, Burns, Byron, and Wordsworth will be Platonists ; and that the dull men will be Lockeists. Then politics and commerce will absorb from the educated class men of talents without genius, precisely because such have no resistance.

Bacon, capable of ideas, yet devoted to ends, required in his map of the mind, first of all, universality or *prima philosophia*, the receptacle for all such profitable observations and axioms as fall not within the compass of any of the special parts of philosophy, but are more common, and of a higher stage. He held this element essential : it is never out of mind : he never spares rebukes (2) for such as neglect it ; believing that no perfect discovery can be made in a flat or level, but you must ascend to a higher science.

A few generalizations always circulate in the world whose authors we do not rightly know, which astonish, and appear to be avenues to vast kingdoms of thought, and these are in the world *constants*, like the Copernican and Newtonian theories in physics.

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(1) *Locke* (1632-1704) an English philosopher who rejected Descartes' theory of innate ideas, and pointed to experience, sensation, and reflection, as the sources of all human knowledge.

(2) *Rebukes :* harsh blame.

In England, these may be traced usually to Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, or Hooker (1), and do all have a kind of filial retrospect to Plato and the Greeks. Of this kind is Lord Bacon's sentence, that « nature is commanded by obeying her ; » his doctrine of poetry, which « accommodates the shows of things to the desires of the mind, » or the Zoroastrian definition of poetry, mystical, yet exact, « apparent pictures of unapparent natures ; » Spenser's creed, that « soul is form, and doth the body make ; » the theory of Berkeley that we have no certain assurance of the existence of matter.

I cite these generalizations, merely to indicate a class. Not these particulars, but the mental plane or the atmosphere from which they emanate, was the home and element of the writers and readers in what we loosely call the Elizabethan age (say, in literary history, the period from 1575 to 1625), yet a period almost short enough to justify Ben Jonson's remark on Lord Bacon — « about his time, and within his view, were born all the wits that could honour a nation, or help study. »

DECLINE OF IDEALISM

Such richness of genius had not existed more than once before. These heights could not be maintained. As we find stumps (2) of vast trees in our exhausted soils and have received traditions of their ancient fertility to tillage, so history reckons epochs in which the intellect of famed races became effete. So it fared with English genius. These heights were followed by a meanness, and a descent of the mind into lower levels ; the loss of wings ; no high speculation. Locke, to whom the meaning of ideas was unknown, became the type of philosophy, and his « understanding » the measure, in all nations, of the English intellect (3). His countrymen forsook the lofty sides of

(1) Richard *Hooker*, a celebrated divine (1553-1600).
(2) *Stumps* : broken trunks.
(3) *Locke's* chief work is the « *Essay on the Human understanding.* » Cf. about this writer VOLTAIRE's thirteenth *Letter concerning the English Nation.*

Parnassus, on which they had once walked with echoing steps, and disused the studies once so beloved ; the powers of thought fell into neglect. The later English want the faculty of Plato and Aristotle, of grouping men in natural classes by an insight of general laws, so deep, that the rule is deduced with equal precision from few subjects or from one, as from multitudes of lives. Shakespeare is supreme in that, as in all the great mental energies. The Germans generalize : the English cannot interpret the German mind. German science comprehends the English. The absence of the faculty in England is shown by the timidity which accumulates mountains of facts, as a bad general wants myriads of men and miles of redoubts, to compensate the inspirations of courage and conduct.

The English shrink from a generalization (A). « They do not look abroad into universality, or they draw only a bucketful at the fountain of the First Philosophy for their occasion, and do not go to the spring-head. » Bacon, who said this, is almost unique among his countrymen in that faculty, at least among the prosewriters.

INTELLECTUAL LIMITATIONS

English genius is wise and rich, but it lives on its capital. It is retrospective. How can it discern and hail (1) the new forms that are looming (2) up on the horizon — new and gigantic thoughts which cannot dress themselves out of any old ward-robe of the past ?

The essays, the fiction, and the poetry of the day (3) have the like municipal limits. Dickens, with preternatural (4) apprehension (5) of the language of manners, and the varieties of street life, with pathos and laughter, with patriotic and still enlarging genero-

(A) Cf. TAINE's chapter on « The English Mind » in his *Notes on England*.

(1) *To hail :* to greet the appearance of.
(2) *To loom :* to be faintly visible.
(3) *The day :* the present time, *i. e.*, 1856.
(4) *Preter :* super.
(5) *Apprehension :* understanding.

sity, writes London tracts. He is a painter of English details, like Hogarth ; local and temporary in his tints and style, and local in his aims. Their novelists despair of the heart. Thackeray finds that God has made no allowance for the poor thing in his universe ; more's the pity, he thinks : but 'tis not for us to be wiser : we must renounce ideals, and accept London.

The brilliant Macaulay (1), who expresses the tone of the English governing classes of the day, explicitly teaches, that *good* means good to eat, good to wear, material commodity ; that the glory of modern philosophy is its direction on « fruit ; » to yield economical inventions ; and that its merit is to avoid ideas, and avoid morals. He thinks it the distinctive merit of the Baconian philosophy, in its triumph over the old Platonic, its disentangling the intellect from theories of the all-Fair and all-Good, and pinning (2) it down to the making a better sick-chair and a better wine-whey (3) for an invalid ; this, not ironically but in good faith ; that « solid advantage, » as he calls it, meaning always sensual benefit, is the only good. The eminent benefit of astronomy is the better navigation it creates, to enable the fruit-ships to bring home their lemons and wine to the London grocer. It was a curious result, in which the civility and religion of England for a thousand years, ends, in denying morals, and reducing the intellect to a saucepan. The critic hides his scepticism under the English cant of practical. To convince the reason, to touch the conscience, is romantic pretension. The fine arts fall to the ground. Beauty, except as luxurious commodity, does not exist. It is very certain, I may say in passing, that if Lord Bacon had been only the sensualist his critic pretends, he would never have acquired the fame which now entitles him to this patronage. It is because he had imagination,

(1) *T. B. Macaulay* (1800-1859) : an English essayist and historian, remarkable for his lucid style.
(2) *To pin down :* to reserve, to restrict.
(3) *Wine-whey :* the part of milk (soured by the use of wine) that remains liquid after coagulation.

the leisures of the spirit, and basked (1) in an element of contemplation out of all modern English atmospheric gauges (2), that he is impressive to the imaginations of men, and has become a potentate not to be ignored.

ENGLISH MATTER OF FACTNESS

The bias of Englishmen to practical skill has reacted on the national mind. They are incapable of an inutility, and respect the five mechanic powers (3) even in their song. The voice of their modern muse has a slight hint of the steam-whistle, and the poem is created as an ornament and finish of their monarchy, and by no means as the bird of a new morning which forgets the past world in the full enjoyment of that which is forming. They are with difficulty ideal ; they are the most conditioned men, as if, having the best conditions, they could not bring themselves to forfeit them. Every one of them is a thousand years old, and lives by his memory ; and when you say this, they accept it as praise.

Nothing comes to the book-shops but politics, travels, statistics, tabulation (4), and engineering, and even what is called philosophy and letters is mechanical in its structure, as if inspiration had ceased ; as if no vast hope, no religion, no song of joy, no wisdom, no analogy, existed any more. The tone of colleges, and of scholars and of literary society has this mortal air. I seem to walk on a marble floor, where nothing will grow. They exert every variety of talent on a lower ground, and may be said to live and act in a sub-mind (5). They have lost all commanding views in literature, philosophy, and science. A good Englishman shuts himself out of three fourths of his mind and confines himself to one fourth. He has learning, good sense, power of labour, and lo-

(1) *To bask :* to lie leisurely.
(2) *Gauge :* criterion ; standard of estimation.
(3) *Mechanic powers :* the elementary parts of machines.
(4) *Tabulation :* the arranging of figures or facts in a tabular form.
(5) *A sub-mind :* an inferior mind.

gic ; but a faith in the laws of the mind like that of Archimedes ; a belief like that of Euler (1) and Kepler (2), that experience must follow and not lead the laws of the mind ; a devotion to the theory of politics, like that of Hooker, and Milton, and Harrington (3), the modern English mind repudiates.

I fear the same fault lies in their science, since they have known how to make it repulsive, and bereave (4) nature of its charm ; — though perhaps the complaint flies wider, and the vice attaches to many more than to British physicists. No hope, no sublime augury, cheers the student, no secure striding from experiment onward to a foreseen law, but only a casual dipping here and there, like diggers in California « prospecting for a placer » (5) that will pay (6). A horizon of brass of the diameter of his umbrella shuts down around his senses. Squalid (7) contentment with conventions, satire at the names of philosophy and religion, parochial (8) and shop-till (9) politics, and idolatry of usage, betray the ebb of life and spirit. As they trample on nationalities to reproduce London and Londoners in Europe and Asia, so they fear the hostility of ideas, of poetry, of religion — ghosts, which they cannot lay (10), — and, having attempted to domesticate and dress the Blessed Soul itself in English broad-cloth (11) and gaiters, they are tormented with fear that herein lurks (12) a force that will sweep their system away.

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(1) *Euler* (1707-1783) a Swiss mathematician.
(2) *Kepler* (1571-1630) a German astronomer.
(3) *Harrington* (1611-1677), an English Republican and political writer, the author of *Oceana* (1656), a utopian work in which he examined « quel était le plus haut point de liberté où la constitution d'un Etat peut être portée. » (Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, XI ,chap. VI).
(4) *To bereave :* to deprive.
(5) *Placer :* a spot in the bed of a stream, containing particles of gold.
(6) *To pay :* to produce material advantages.
(7) *Squalid :* coarse, mean, sordid.
(8) *Parochial :* concerning a *parish*, a limited area.
(9) *Shop till :* money-drawer.
(10) *To lay a ghost :* to exorcize an evil spirit.
(11) *Broadcloth :* fine black cloth.
(12) *To lurk :* to be hidden.

The artists say, « Nature puts them out (1) ; » the scholars have become unideal. They parry (2) earnest speech with banter (3) and levity ; they laugh you down, or they change the subject. « The fact is, » say they over their wine, « all that about liberty, and so forth, is gone by ; it won't do (4) any longer. » The practical and comfortable oppress them with inexorable claims, and the smallest fraction of power remains for heroism and poetry. No poet dares murmur of beauty out of the precinct (5) of his rhymes. No priest dares hint at a Providence which does not respect English utility. The island is a roaring volcano of fate, of material values, of tariffs, and laws of repression, glutted (6) markets and low prices.

In the absence of the highest aims, of the pure love of knowledge, and the surrender to nature, there is the suppression (7) of the imagination, the priapism (8) of the senses and the understanding ; we have the factitious instead of the natural · tasteless expense, arts of comfort, and the rewarding as an illustrious inventor whosoever will contrive (9) one impediment more to interpose between the man and his objects.

Thus poetry is degraded, and made ornamental. Pope (10) and his school wrote poetry fit to put round frosted cake. We want the miraculous ; the beauty which we can manufacture at no mill — can give no account of. The poetry of course is low and prosaic, only now and then, as in Wordsworth, conscientious, or in Byron, passional ; or in Tennyson, factitious. But if I should count the poets who have contributed to the Bible of existing England senten-

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(1) *To put out :* to make angry ; to disconcert.
(2) *To parry :* to avert, Fr. « parer » (un coup).
(3) *Banter :* raillery.
(4) *It won't do :* it won't serve.
(5) *Precinct :* limits.
(6) *Glutted :* congested, overfull.
(7) *Suppression :* keeping down ; « répression. »
(8) *Priapism :* debaucherv, corruption.
(9) *To contrive :* to invent and manufacture.
(10) *Pope :* (1688-1744) the most representative poet of the English « classical school » and the poetry « of Reason ».

ces of guidance and consolation which are still glowing and effective — how few ! Shall I find my heavenly bread in the reigning poets ? Where is great design in modern English poetry ? The English have lost sight of the fact that poetry exists to speak the spiritual law, and that no wealtf of description or of fancy is yet essentially new, and out of the limits of prose, until this condition is reached.

The exceptional fact of the period is the genius of Wordsworth (1). He had no master but nature and solitude. « He wrote a poem, » says Landor (2), « without the aid of war. » His verse is the voice of sanity in a worldly and ambitious age. One regrets that his temperament was not more liquid and musical. He has written longer than he was inspired. But for the rest, he has no competitor.

Tennyson (3) is endowed precisely in points where Wordsworth wanted. There is no finer ear, nor more command of the keys (4) of language. Colour, like the dawn, flows over the horizon from his pencil, in waves so rich that we do not miss the central form. Through all his refinements, too, he has reached the public — a certificate of good sense and general power, since he who aspires to be the English poet must be as large as London, not in the same kind as London, but in his own kind. But he wants a subject, and climbs no mount of vision to bring its secrets to the people. He contents himself with describing the Englishman as he is, and proposes no better. There are all degrees in poetry, and we must be thankful for every beautiful talent. But it is only a first success when the ear is gained. The best office of the best poets has been to show how low and uninspired was their general style, and that only once or twice they have struck the high chord.

Meantime, I know that a retrieving power lies in

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(1) *Wordsworth* (1770-1850).

(2) Walter Savage *Landor*, a poet and critic (1775-1864).

(3) *A. Tennyson*, (1809-1892) had only given part of his works at the time.

(4) *Keys* : tones.

the English race, which seems to make any recoil (1) possible ; in other words, there is at all times a minority of profound minds existing in the nation, capable of appreciating every soaring (1) of intellect and every hint of tendency. While the constructive talent seems dwarfed and superficial, the criticism is often in the noblest tone, and suggests the presence of the invisible gods. I can well believe what I have often heard, that there are two nations in England ; but it is not the Poor and the Rich ; nor is it the Normans and Saxons ; nor the Celt and the Goth. But the two complexions, or two styles of mind — the perceptive class, and the practical finality class — are ever in counterpoise, interacting mutually ; one, in hopeless minorities ; the other, in huge masses ; one studious, contemplative, experimenting ; the other, the ungrateful pupil, scornful of the source, whilst availing itself of the knowledge for gain ; these two nations, of genius and of animal force, though the first consist of only a dozen souls, and the second of twenty millions, for ever by their discord and their accord yield the power of the English State.

XII. THE « TIMES »

JOURNALISM

England is full of manly, clever, well-bred men who possess the talent of writing off-hand pungent paragraphs, expressing with clearness and courage their opinion on any person or performance. Valuable or not, it is a skill that is rarely found out of the English journals. The English do this, as they write poetry, as they ride and box, by being educated to it. Hundreds of clever writers make poems, or short essays for a journal, as they make speeches in Parliament and on the hustings, or, as they shoot and

(1) *Recoil :* reaction.
(2) *To soar :* to fly aloft.

ride. It is a quite accidental and arbitrary direction of their general ability. Rude health and spirits, an Oxford education, and the habits of society are implied, but not a ray of genius. It comes of the crowded state of the professions, the violent interest which all men take in politics (A), the facility of experimenting in the journals and high pay.

The most conspicuous result of this talent is the Times newspaper. No power in England is more felt, more feared, or more obeyed. What you read in the morning in that journal, you shall hear in the evening in all society. It has ears everywhere, and its information is earliest, completest, and surest. It has shown those qualities which are dear to Englishmen, unflinching adherence to its objects, prodigal intellectual ability, and a towering assurance, backed by the perfect organization in its printing-house, and its world-wide net-work of correspondence and reports.

The influence of this journal is a recognized power in Europe, and, of course, none is more conscious of it than its conductors. The tone of its articles has often been the occasion of comment from the official organs of the continental courts, and sometimes the ground of diplomatic complaint.

The parts are kept in concert ; all the articles appear to proceed from a single will. It draws from any number of learned and skilful contributors ; but a more learned and skilful person supervises, corrects, and co-ordinates. Of this closet, the secret does not transpire. No writer is suffered to claim the authorship of any paper ; everything good, from whatever quarter, comes out editorially ; and thus, by making the paper everything, and those who write it nothing, the character and the awe of the journal gain (1).

The English like it for its complete information. A statement of fact in the Times is as reliable as a

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(A) « Un couvreur se fait apporter la Gazette sur les toits pour la lire. » (MONTESQUIEU, *Notes sur l'Angleterre*).

(1) The articles published in the *Times* still appear anonymously.

citation from Hansard (1). Then, they like its independence; they do not know, when they take it up, what their paper is going to say: but, above all, for the nationality and confidence of its tone. It thinks for them all; it is their understanding and day's ideal daguerreotyped. When I see them reading its columns they seem to me becoming every moment more British.

The Times, like every important institution, shows the way to a better. It is a living index of the colossal British power. Its existence honours the people who dare to print all they know, dare to know all the facts, and do not wish to be flattered by hiding the extent of the public disaster. There is always safety in valour. I wish I could add, that this journal aspired to deserve the power it wields by guidance of the public sentiment to the right. It is usually pretended in Parliament and elsewhere, that the English press has a high tone — which it has not. It has an imperial tone, as of a powerful and independent nation. But as with other empires, its tone is prone to be official, and even officinal.

PUNCH

Punch is equally an expression of English good sense, as the London Times. It is the comic version of the same sense. Many of its caricatures are equal to the best pamphlets, and will convey to the eye in an instant the popular view which was taken of each turn of public affairs. Its sketches are usually made by masterly hands, and sometimes with genius; the delight of every class, because uniformly guided by that taste which is tyrannical in England. It is a new trait of the nineteenth century that the wit and humour of England, as in Punch, have taken the direction of humanity and freedom (A).

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(1) *Hansard*: the official record of parliamentary proceedings, named after L. Hansard, 1752-1828, printer to the House of Commons.

(A) See the chapter on *Punch* in H. TAINE'S *Notes on England*.

XIII. RESULT

England is the best of actual nations. It is no ideal framework, it is an old pile (1) built in different ages, with repairs, additions, and makeshifts ; but you see the poor best you have got. London is the epitome (2) of our times, and the Rome of to-day. They stand in solid phalanx four-square to the points of compass : they constitute the modern world, they have earned their vantage-ground, and held it through ages of adverse possession. They are well marked and differing from other leading races. England is tender hearted. Rome was not. England is not so public in its bias ; private life is its place of honour. Truth in private life, untruth in public, marks these home-loving men. Their political conduct is not decided by general views, but by internal intrigues and personal and family interest. They cannot readily see beyond England. The history of Rome and Greece, when written by their scholars, degenerates into English party pamphlets. They cannot see beyond England, nor in England can they transcend the interests of the governing classes. « English principles » mean a primary regard to the interests of property.

The foreign policy of England, though ambitious and lavish of money, has not often been generous or just (A). It has a principal regard to the aristocratic bias of the ambassador, which usually puts him in sympathy with the continental Courts. It sanctioned the partition of Poland, it betrayed Genoa, Sicily, Parga, Greece, Turkey, Rome, and Hungary.

Some public regards they have. They have abol-

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(1) *Pile :* large building.
(2) *Epitome :* summary.

(A) Cf. Montesquieu : « Une nation commerçante devient souverainement jalouse ; et elle s'afflige plus de la prospérité des autres qu'elle ne jouit de la sienne. » (*Esprit des Lois*, XIX, chap. xxvii) ; again : « Elle est moins occupée de sa prospérité que de son envie de la prospérité des autres ; ce qui est son esprit dominant. » (*Notes sur l'Angleterre*).

ished slavery in the West Indies, and put an end to human sacrifices in the East. At home they have a certain statute hospitality. England keeps open doors, as a trading country must, to all nations. It is one of their fixed ideas, and wrathfully supported by their laws in unbroken sequence for a thousand years. In *Magna Charta* it was ordained, that all « merchants shall have safe and secure conduct to go out and come into England, and to stay there, and to pass as well by land as by water, to buy and sell by the ancient allowed customs, without any evil toll, except in time of war, or when they shall be of any nation at war with us. » It is a statute and obliged hospitality, and peremptorily maintained. But this shop-rule had one magnificent effect. It extends its cold unalterable courtesy to political exiles of every opinion, and is a fact which might give additional light to that portion of the planet seen from the farthest star. But this perfunctory hospitality puts no sweetness into their unaccommoding manners, no check on that puissant nationality which makes their existence incompatible with all that is not English (A).

I have noted the reserve of power in the English temperament. In the island, they never let out all the length of all the reins, there is no rage, no abandonment or ecstasy of will or intellect, like that of the Arabs in the time of Mahomet, or like that which intoxicated France in 1789. But who would see the uncoiling (1) of that tremendous spring, the explosion of their well-husbanded (2) forces, must follow the swarms (3) which, pouring now for two hundred years from the British islands, have sailed, and rode, and traded, and planted, through all climates, mainly following the belt of empire, the temperate zones, carrying the Saxon seed, with its instinct for liberty and law, for arts and for thought — acquiring under

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(A) « Les Anglais vous font peu de politesses, mais jamais d'impolitesses. » (MONTESQUIEU, *Notes sur l'Angleterre.*)

(1) *Uncoiling :* unwinding ; (the *coils*, or spirals, of a spring, or rope, or serpent).
(2) *Husbanded :* organized, managed.
(3) *Swarms :* crowds.

some skies a more electric energy than the native air allows — to the conquest of the globe.

Their mind is in a state of arrested development — a divine cripple (1), like Vulcan ; a blind *savant*, like Huber and Sanderson. They do not occupy themselves on matters of general and lasting import, but on a corporeal civilization, on goods that perish in the using. But they read with good intent, and what they learn they incarnate. The English mind turns every abstraction it can receive into a portable utensil, or a working institution. Such is their tenacity, and such their practical turn, that they hold all they gain. Hence we say, that only the English race can be trusted with freedom — freedom which is double-edged and dangerous to any but the wise and robust.

There is cramp (2) limitation in their habit of thought, sleepy routine, and a tortoise's instinct to hold hard to the ground with his claws , lest he should be thrown on his back. There is a drag of inertia which resists reform in every shape ; — law-reform, army-reform, extension of suffrage, Jewish franchise, Catholic emancipation — the abolition of slavery, of impressment, penal code, and entails. They praise this drag, under the formula that it is the excellence of the British constitution, that no law can anticipate the public opinion. These poor tortoises must hold hard, for they feel no wings sprouting at their shoulders. Yet somewhat divine warms at their heart, and waits a happier hour. It hides in their sturdy will. « Will, » said the old philosophy, « is the measure of power, » and personality is the token of this race. *Quid vult valde vult.* What they do they do with a will. They are slow and reticent, and are like a dull good horse which lets every nag (3) pass him, but with whip and spur will run down every racer in the field. They are right in their feeling, though wrong in their speculation.

The English have given importance to individuals, a principal end and fruit of every society. Every man

(1) *Cripple :* deformed, paralysed man.
(2) *Cramp :* contracted.
(3) *Nag :* a small horse.

is allowed and encouraged to be what he is, and is guarded in the indulgence of his whim. « Magna Charta is such a fellow that he will have no sovereign. » By this general activity, and by this sacredness of individuals, they have in seven hundred years evolved the principles of freedom. It is the land of patriots, martyrs, sages, and bards, and if the ocean out of which it emerged should wash it away, it will be remembered as an island famous for immortal laws, for the announcements of original right which make the stone tables of liberty (A).

THE END

(A) Cf. « Les Anglais sont un grand peuple moral et politique ; mais, en général, ils ne sont pas un peuple sociable. Concentrés dans la sainte et douce intimité du foyer de famille, quand ils en sortent, ce n'est pas pour le plaisir, ce n'est pas pour le besoin de communiquer leur âme ou de répandre leur sympathie, c'est l'usage, c'est la vanité qui les conduit. La vanité est l'âme de toute société anglaise ; c'est elle qui a construit cette forme de société froide, compassée, étiquetée, c'est elle qui a créé ces classifications de rangs, de titres, de dignités, de richesses, par lesquelles seules les hommes y sont marqués, et qui ont fait une abstraction complète de l'homme pour ne considérer que le nom, l'habit, la forme sociale. » (LAMARTINE, *Voyage en Orient*, 30 juillet 1832).

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