

## THE ANTIDOTE

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### SCANDAL.

The descent from sacred Friendship to scurrilous Scandal is long and steep—"Hyperion to a Satyr"—and yet as the serpent beguiled our first mother, with specious arguments, insinuating that he had only her welfare at heart, so there are some who pretend that scandal is published for the benefit of society, maintaining that truth should always be proclaimed from the house-tops.

We disbelieve both these assertions regarding scandal. First those who soil their hands with it do not do so for the public good, but to pander to the lower tastes of their readers, and secondly for the sake of charity and decency, when truth takes an ugly, instead of a beautiful form, it is better that it should be veiled from the common gaze.

Truth is often unpalatable, sometimes harsh and cruel, and we see no advantage to be gained by splitting open every diseased apple in order to expose the rottenness of the core, but consider it preferable to allow the fruit to lie untouched in the mud into which it has fallen.

There seem to be certain papers who reverse the plan of Diogenes and instead of using their lantern to seek for an honest man, take a pleasure in exposing the follies of their neighbors, and gloat

with delight when they can catch the poor fellows tripping. Better still if the individual be of the gentler sex, for you may be sure these papers are so convinced of their own virtue, that they never hesitate to fling the first stone. Having no "beam in their own eye" they feel themselves not only justified in pecking at the mote in their sister's optic, but are in duty bound to do so, and holding up the picture, devoutly thank heaven they are not a that publican.

So we may observe one or two of the American Journals growing pathetically moral over a "faux pas" in the family of the English aristocracy, giving their readers to understand that such is the rule and not the exception, while they placidly ignore the fact that more divorces occur in their own, than in any other land.

But there is a lower depth still to which scandalmongers will stoop; when they do not merely revel in the mire they find—and add to—but absolutely endeavor to throw a glamour or romance over certain actions and persons, the former of which we do not converse about in the family circle, and as for the latter we undoubtedly would not receive them within our doors. We do not wish to be squeamish, but just as we have no sympathy with those who would clothe with the heroic mantle a Jack Shepperd or a Eugene Aram, so we have a thorough detestation of the journalists who prostitute the liberty of the press into license, and endeavor to cast a false halo over a murky pool.

We can see no good—but much evil—arising from the practice of retailing scandal. Divested of the trappings with which it is dressed to make it attractive (heaven save the mark!), it simply means that one perhaps two, homes have been wrecked in a manner, about which we do not care to read, aloud to our daughters, because of the blush that the recital would call to their cheeks.

There is a poem by Lord Byron, very clever, but scarcely adapted for the day which as the song says comes "twixt Saturday and Monday," yet some of the items published in the dailies and

weeklies with headings, catching to the eye, are every bit as objectionable in their matter as the poem alluded to, while they are often worse in their tendency, since they are wrapped up in a mock sentiment simply despicable.

It has always struck us that scandal like a snake, has something loathsome about it, and that those who touch the crawling reptile cannot help carrying away with them some of the slime.

At the beginning of this article we coupled together the names of Friendship and Scandal and we may finish by exclaiming with Hamlet,

"Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed

"And batten on this moor."

"Do you see that remarkably tall young man over there, Miss Keenwit? Well, he was originally intended for the church."

"Indeed! I should have supposed him to have been intended for the steeple."

Minister.—"Don't you know that strong drink is man's worst enemy?"

Fast Young Man.—"Yes, but we are commanded to love our enemies."

### CRITICISM.

"For I am nothing if not critical."

Iago.

There are a great number who imagine, that criticism means condemnation, but this is quite an erroneous idea. True criticism should be strictly impartial, administering praise as well as blame, where each is deserved, and a criticism which is entirely one sided, is utterly unworthy of the name.

Some authors—generally those who are at the commencement of their career, and as yet unknown to fame—are apt to regard critics, as heartless cynics, who take a pleasure in picking holes in the books they review, and will never see, or at any rate, give credit for, the good points. That there are a few such, may be allowed, but they are the exception and not the rule, just as there are others of the opposite type, who simply breathe adulation, as fulsome as it is unmerited. Both these methods eventually defeat their object, inasmuch as there are many among the reading public quite as com-