

out. The orator still stands in the forum, but his lips are mute, and his hand motionless, and the sailor yet may be seen on the deck, but no breeze wafts his ship onwards, for warrior, scholar, orator, sailor, all quietly wait, that we may examine them leisurely. Here we find ourselves in a cooler and calmer atmosphere. We are no longer jostled by the crowd. The war of commerce is far away—all is hushed and still, and suited for calm enquiry. Most men know what it is to rush away during the feverish heat of summer from the din and dust of a large city, far away, to the green hills and quiet country, and there, in the cool shade, leisurely pluck the wild-flower, and pass a short time in quiet reflection. And equally pleasant and healthful is it, at times, to rush backwards to History,—to leave behind us for a little, the busy cares of the Present, and other anxieties for the Future.

In nothing, perhaps, do men differ more widely, than in their views of the comparative merits and the relative glory of the "Present" and the "Past." There has always been in human society, a class of men known as "moppers," men who are everlastingly harping on the same sad and plaintive string, who seem to have lost, at least, all confidence in mankind, if not in the Governor of man's destiny—who point to the Past, as "the golden age," where virtue reigned supreme—who are dissatisfied that their lot has been cast among the degenerate men and the barren events of the Present, and who look forwards to the future with the most terrible forebodings of "misery and woe." The theory of such men is—that the world grows wicked as it grows old—that the progress of human society is from better to worse—that the development of the race is downwards—in short, that the great, the beautiful, and the good must be sought for in the Past. And were human society wholly made up of such men, the consequences might be easily foreseen, the wheels of progress would soon become clogged and motionless, the life blood of human society would very soon stagnate and cease its circulation. But there is always another portion of society, that serves most effectually to prevent this stagnation. According to them, the Past is equivalent to the Inferior, it is the Egypt of bondage, while the future is the Canaan of rest. Every year, as it passes, brings the world nearer the brighter Future. Their watchword is "Onwards." Onwards at any price, and at all hazards. "Throw down the old," cry they, and erect the new; throw down the false and set up the true, perish the miserable forms of the antiquated Past, build up the noble Temple of the Future, that the nobler man may come forward and worship. Their theory is, that the progress of man is from worse to better, that the world grows wiser as it grows older, as the river grows stronger when it nears the ocean, and the beauties of the plant increase, as you mount upwards from

the ungainly roots, the spreading leaf, up still, to the budding blossom, and the expanding flower. "Through the shadow of the world, we sweep into the brighter day," say they,—and therefore sweep, O world, that the brighter day may dawn."

The careful student of History will, however, not fall in discovering that while in either of the foregoing theories, there is an element of Truth, yet there is absolute Truth in neither. He will find that a want of Faith, and a melancholic Temperament exaggerates, in the one case, and an easy credulity and sanguine Temperament in the other. We think he will confess that History establishes the fact of Progression, that there is certainly an emerging from chaos, that the day of human History grows brighter, as its Sun mounts higher and higher, that the clouds and mist are gradually, though slowly dispersing, and that all the phenomena of the Past seem to augur the advent of a brighter and a better Future. He will find that the race of which he constitutes an atom, has not lived, and toiled, and studied, and died, wholly in vain, that through the agonies and struggles of the Past, something has been gained, and that this something is all the more precious, on account of the enormous price frequently paid as its purchase. He will indeed see generation after generation of men, like the leaves of our forests, grow up only to pass away, but like them too, leaving behind them some nourishment for a future generation. He will discover that the gems dug with immense toil from the mines of science have not been buried in the same graves with the discoverers—that the flowers plucked from the fields of knowledge have not been hopelessly scattered in the four winds of heaven, but that gems and flowers have been carefully preserved, and that mankind are greatly enriched by the treasure.

Still, let us not over-estimate all this. We live in an age when we hear much talk about Progress and "Development," much that deserves our best attention, and far more of what is mere "talk," shallow and superficial, though delivered in fine-sounding phrases and Philosophical Terms. This 19th century has witnessed an attempt to revive the old Monad Theory, and that peculiar kind of development so flattering to the dignity of our common nature, by making us merely a higher species of the monkey tribe. The same century too has witnessed the doctrines of "Development" applied with much cleverness and great ingenuity, and learning, to prove that what Protestants generally call "the abominations of Popery" is the natural growth of the doctrines of our Saviour, and consequently must possess the Divine sanction and approval. And everywhere we may hear declarations of human advancement, of a growth in knowledge, an accumulation of resources, an amassing of power.

But while we are ready to acknowledge the