

ically desire not to do so, but acquire a taste for the shallow and evanescent. Only great men love the purity and seclusiveness of the solitary place. Only those whose beings are great enough to comprehend some of nature's secrets find it congenial along the "cool, sequestered vale of life." Emerson, Tennyson, Wordsworth, Moore and Virgil were men of great parts, whose greatness lay in their ability to commune with Nature and through her with Nature's God. To-day the superficial tendency is seen in many directions. Of old our fathers became stalwart in spirit by digesting such books as "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," or "Watson's Divinity," and by listening to such men as Knox, Wesley and Chalmers; but now, the generation is showing its degenerated state by an inordinate desire for cheap sensational literature and by rushing to hear preachers whose popular orations are characterized more by hollow demonstrations than by weighty argument and the presentation of saving truth. These things may right themselves by and by, but we should face matters as they are, and do something to stem the enervating tide. Nothing would be more beneficial to the race than a departure from the hurry-scurry tendencies of the time and a return to the calm, deep and lasting sources of true human greatness.

4.—Furthermore, John the Baptist may be accounted great because of his manly independence. Emerson would say of him, that he had a great deal of character, as that eminent writer looked upon character as that which places a man above his fellows and which always triumphs. There have been periods in the world's history when it was not a hard matter to be independent, and there are places where it is easier to be oneself than in others. John commands attention in view of these considerations, for he lived at a time when slavish adherence to men and customs was the rule of life, and in a country where conventionality seemed to be necessary to existence. In the face of all this he was himself, and it was a noble self. He had a principle to stand for and he did not dream of doing anything else than standing for it. With rulers opposed to his