

"of the community. On all occasions, according to them, *Vox populi est vox Dei*. We are pronounced to be a highly cultivated, intellectual, and civilized people. When we, the people, called for the exclusion of small bills, we were right; when we called for the repeal of the exclusion, we were equally right. We are divided into political parties nearly equal, but we are both right. We disagree respecting the fundamental principles of Government; we quarrel about the laws of a circulating medium; we are bank, and anti-bank, tariff and anti-tariff, for a national bankrupt law and against a national bankrupt law, for including corporations and for excluding corporations, for unlimited internal improvement, judicious internal improvement, and for no internal improvement. We have creeds, sects, denominations, and faiths of all varieties, each insisting that it is right, and that all the others are wrong. We have cold water societies, but many more that habitually deal in hot water. We are anti-masonic and masonic, pro-slavery and anti-slavery; and are spiced and seasoned with abolitionism, immediateism, gradualism, mysticism, materialism, agrarianism; sensualism, egotism, scepticism, idealism, transcendentalism, Van Burenism, Harrisonism, Mormonism, and animal-magnetism. Every public and private topic has its furious partisans, struggling with antagonists equally positive and unyielding, and yet we are told that we are a well informed, a highly civilized people. If we look to our Legislative halls, to the lawgivers of the land, to the men who have been selected for the greatest wisdom and experience, we shall see the same disagreement and collision on every subject. He who would play the politician must shut his eyes to all this and talk incessantly of the intelligence of the people.—Instead of attempting to lead the community in the right way, he must go with them in the wrong.

"It is true he may preach sound doctrine in reference to the education of youth. He may state the vast influence it has upon the whole life of man. He may freely point out the imperfections in the moral, intellectual, and physical instruction of the children of the present day. He may urge the absolute necessity of good teachers, of the multiplication of libraries, and every other means for the diffusion of useful knowledge. He may expatiate upon the superstitious fears, the tormenting fancies, the erroneous notions, the wrong prepossessions, and the laxity of morals which most children are allowed to imbibe for want of early and correct instruction, and which in the majority of cases last through life. He may, with truth and freedom, declare that the mental impressions at twenty gives, the coloring to the remainder of life; and that most young men of our country, of that age, have not half the correct information and sound principles which might with proper care have been instilled into their minds before they were ten years old. But here the politician must stop his censures, and close his advice.

"At twenty-one, the ignorant, uneducated and wayward youth is entitled to the right of suffrage, and mingles with a community composed of materials like himself. He bursts the shell which had enveloped him; he emerges from the chrysalis state of darkness and ignorance, and at once becomes a component part of a highly intelligent, enlightened, and civilized community!

"If we honestly desire to know society as it is, we must subject it to a rigorous analysis. We must divest ourselves of all partiality, and not lay the flattering unction of vanity to our souls. The clear perception of our deficiencies, of the feeble advances already made in knowledge and civilization, is the

"best stimulus to united, energetic and useful exertion. Bitter truth is much more wholesome, than sweet delusion. The gross flattery which is weekly and daily poured out in Legislative speeches, and by a time-serving press has a most pernicious influence upon the public mind and morals.

"The greater the ignorance of the mass, the more readily the flattery is swallowed. He who is the most circumscribed in knowledge, perceives not a single cloud in his mental horizon.

"Attila and his Huns doubtless believed themselves to be the most civilized people on earth; and if they had possessed our Editorial corps, they would have proved it to be so.

"Weak and vain females in the days of their youth have been charged by the other sex with an extraordinary fondness for flattery, but, judging by the constant specimens which are lavishly administered and voraciously swallowed, the male appetite for hyperboles of praise, is altogether superior. The vain glorious boastings of the American press excite the risibility of all intelligent foreigners.

"According to the learned and philosophic De Torqueville, this is the country of all others where public opinion is the most dictatorial and despotic. Like a spoiled child it has been indulged, flattered and caressed by interested sycophants until its capriciousness and tyranny are boundless. When Americans boast of their cultivated minds and human feelings, foreigners point them to the existence of Negro slavery. When they claim the civic merit of unqualified submission to the rules of social order, they are referred to the frequent exhibitions of duels and lynch law. When they insist upon the prevalence among us of strict integrity, sound morals, and extensive piety, they are shown an American newspaper which probably contains the announcement of half a dozen thefts, robberies, embezzlements, horrid murders, and appalling suicides.

"Burns, the eminent Scotch poet, seems to have believed that good would result,

"If Providence the gift would give us,
"To see ourselves, as others see us."

"If we had this gift, much of our overweening vanity would doubtless be repressed, and many would seriously ponder on the means of reformation, and improvement. But that any great improvement can be made upon the moral propensities of the adults of the present day is not to be expected. The raw material of humanity, after being even partially neglected for twenty years, generally bids defiance to every manufacturing process.

"The moral education, that is the proper discipline of the dispositions and affections of the mind, by which a reverence for the Supreme Being, a love of justice, of benevolence, and of truth are expanded, strengthened, and directed, and the conscience enlightened and invigorated, must have its basis deeply and surely laid in childhood.

"Truth, in the most important parts of moral science, is most easily taught, and makes the most indelible impressions in early life, before the infusion of the poison of bad example; before false notions and pernicious opinions have taken root; before the understanding is blunted and distorted by habit, or the mind clouded by prejudice."