

writers, contrasting the past and present condition of England, have come to the same conclusion, namely, that England has greatly degenerated from her former moral greatness, but the reasons they have assigned for this decay are entirely different. According to Goldsmith, "trade's unfeeling train," as giving rise to national wealth, introduces luxury, effeminacy and profligacy, while Cowper contends that the real cause of England's moral depravation is to be found in her base political system.

It does not come within the province of this short essay to determine the sources whence spring these evils complained of by our author, but I cannot refrain from thinking that the mental poison, daily and hourly dealt out, with liberal hands, to the unsuspecting English youth, in the form of vile, trashy literature, is a far greater source of danger to the virtue and morality and consequently to the happiness and prosperity of the English people, than either commerce or political corruption. Though Cowper, from his cheerful and contented home, viewed with wonder and disgust the fatal effects produced by extravagance and dissipation in all public measures, the lack of zeal and piety which characterized the ministers of the gospel, and the want of respect and obedience for constituted authority, still many of the most glaring and deplorable evils of his time are entirely lost sight of.

In a man whose whole soul was bound

up in the material, intellectual and spiritual welfare of his countrymen, whose world was confined within the narrow shores of England, whose intensely patriotic spirit appears in each successive page, it is difficult to ascertain what were his motives in thus leaving untouched the very points which his own sense of honor, propriety and justice must have dictated as especially requiring reformation. But when we examine with what diligence he sought to raise the standard of morality, by unveiling the dreadful vices that contaminated the minds of all, from the powerful prince at whose nod lakes become lawns, woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise, to the poor peasant who drags his "weary way" amidst indigence and squalor, we are inclined to pardon many of those defects, which have rendered his works subject to so much unfavorable criticism.

We think only of the whole-souled author of the *Task*, loving his country as only a true patriot can.

"Britain! with all thy faults I love thee still,"

reflecting the real national character of his genius, detesting fraud and deceit in their manifold forms, as only a man imbued with true Christian principles is able to detest, and picturing in the most touching and impressive manner the pleasures, the happiness, the watchful cares of home life, as only he whose exquisite expressions of love and charity are able to excite the tenderest feelings of the human heart.

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