

THE WANTS OF THE AGE.**MORAL CULTURE.**

It is worthy of remark that the present age has learned what no preceding age seems to have known, that stability of government and the happiness of society, are greatly dependant upon national morality.

The historical illustrations of this doctrine are most melancholy and painful. In various ages have legislators and philosophers devised systems of government, which, one after another, have been adopted, found wanting, and fell to decay. Egypt—Assyria—Greece—Carthage—Rome! where are these. They have perished like the visions of a night that is passed!—perished for the lack of popular virtue; and from their sepulchres is heard the voice of wisdom and warning.

Every form of government has, alike, been the victim of popular corruption—but the progress of decay has been rapid in exact proportion to the popular elements incorporated into each; so that, while the general lesson of decay is sufficiently awful, its special application to a government and institutions so popular as ours, is yet more impressive!

Coincident with the teachings of history are the maxims of modern political science, which inform us that in the book of God's Revelation to man are contained the only principles that can ensure national stability and happiness.

Here then we find the united claims of patriotism and philanthropy presented to us in the most impressive manner by the condition of our fellow men. The necessity of moral culture is also demonstrated by some of the peculiarities of American character: for example by that sordid propensity which is continually driving us into all kinds of enterprize and money-making speculations, and which has attracted the regard of travellers from abroad as a national trait.

Urged on by the national passion the multitude gather about the altar of mammon, while the altars of the living God are deserted or desecrated. The great golden image commands almost universal idolatry. We seem to be impelled by the same spirit that moved the Alchemists of the middle ages: and not the ardor which inspired these enthusiastic explorers of the arena of nature along the thorny path of their investigations exceeded that which animates the mass of our fellow citizens.

Behold the strength and danger of this base passion for wealth manifested in its influence upon our modes of education.

In most of our literary institutions its influence is sadly visible. Every branch of study is estimated by its connexion with the grand business of accumulation, a connexion which we every day hear mentioned under the name of "practical value," a cant expression that has consigned many a noble science to vulgar contempt, and many a god-like genius to starvation. Hence the common enquiry of what benefit is Latin and Greek? Why study abstract sciences, or mathematics beyond vulgar fractions? As though learning and intellectual discipline were to be valued by the pebble, or measured

by one's purse strings! as though the sole design of education were to convert a man's mind into a machine like a mill, into one end of which is to be forced the bullion of knowledge, to come out dollars at the other.

Many an undertaking fully equal to this dollar and dime theory is perfectly unable to discover the worth of those sciences which lie at the very bases of civilized society, and which furnish most of the refined and exalted pleasures of life.

We cannot forget, however, the circumstances in our political condition which give rise to this money-loving spirit. These circumstances are that unfettered freedom of thought and action, which allows every mind unlimited range of invention, and every hand unmeasured liberty of performance: that absence of the distinctions of rank and birth which always renders more honorable the distinctions of wealth; that boundless field of enterprise, and those inexhaustible materials of profitable labor, which are the peculiar gifts of a new world, and finally, that wonderful spirit of combination,—of applying science to practical purposes, by which the age is so strongly marked.

These circumstances who would change? But who does not see that to counteract them all will require a moral energy of no small degree, a moral effort of no ordinary power? Moral culture alone can do this.

In our prevailing system of education, in the great efforts that are now making to influence the minds of men, there prevails an enormous error—the neglect of that part of the mental constitution which is called the heart—the moral affections.

By a very large class of society the intellectual powers alone, are deemed fit subjects of cultivation; and therefore the understanding, the memory, the imagination, and the taste are carefully educated, while every wild passion that degrades and debases, is left to flourish in native luxuriance.

This error, whose selfish and unphilosophical character I will endeavour to show, demands from the friends of the race increased exertions in the cause of moral education.

The error is selfish inasmuch as it attends solely to the happiness of the individual, and takes no thought for society at large. It assumes the proposition that the pupil is made happy by intellectual culture, well knowing at the same time that moral cultivation is most essential to the welfare of a community.

It is unphilosophical—for individual enjoyment is not, in fact, drawn from the intellectual part of our nature. It is the heart,—by which is determined the happiness or misery of every thinking being; and unquestionably the misery of the great chief of fallen spirits is vastly aggravated by the almost infinite grasp and compass of his faculties. The heart is the fountain of woe or bliss. In an uncultivated condition it is like the bitter wells of Marah in the desert; the discipline of education operates upon it like the healing power of Moses upon those fountains, and turns its gall to sweet. If we would find the strongest possible proof that knowledge alone confers not happiness, let us look at

the case of that wisest of all the kings of Israel, who, after searching out all knowledge, and learning all that mortal mind could know, was forced to exclaim with sadness of heart,—“it is all vanity and vexation of spirit!”

It ought ever to be borne in mind by those who are laboring so zealously for the diffusion of what is called 'useful knowledge,' that, except they also diffuse the principles of a sound morality, and take care to make that morality an integral part of every system of education, they are only accumulating the fiery element of future mischief and misery: they are like the modern Prometheus, Frankenstein, clothing with life and energy a being whose lack of conscience and moral perception will make him a terror and a curse to the whole world.

It has been recently said by one of our most distinguished citizens that our collegiate institutions do little for the promotion of a sound morality. My own limited observation and personal experience confirm this remark. The system of teaching therein pursued so generally, neglects the culture of the religious nature—the systems of police, of supervision over the conduct of students, is so lax or so clumsy, and the course of study and reading is so certain to cultivate tastes and feelings hostile to the spirit of Christianity, while the contact and companionship of so many thoughtless, impetuous and passionate young men, is so sure to create and confirm vicious habits, that no parent who has passed through this fiery ordeal, can without trembling, commit his son to the same dangers and temptations.

Cowper, in his Tyrocinium, has described the moral influence of English schools, and colleges, in language familiar to many and exceedingly applicable to similar institutions in our minds. There must be a vast change in these establishments before we can confidently regard them as the nurseries of either piety or good morals: And yet the men therein educated have been, and are, and must, on account of their intellectual discipline and learning, the leaders of public opinion—they who shape and color the general character of the community.

Most fervently do I pray that the desired reformation may speedily be effected in these seminaries of learning.—*From the Ladies' Book.*

CONTRASTS;

Or, a Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages, and corresponding Buildings of the Present Day.

[From a Review of the Tablet.]

MEANS OF RESTORATION.

If men could only be led to view Catholic truth, not as she appears at the present time, not as she is distorted by popular prejudice, but in her ancient solemn garb, what immense results might we not expect! The ordinary ideas in England of Catholicism (the pure faith of the merciful Redeemer) are associated with faggots, racks, inquisitions, tortures, daggers, poisoning, and all the horrors which wretched crafty politicians have perpetrated in various ages under the name and cloak of religion; accounts of which, under exaggerated and

multiplied forms, are most industriously circulated. On the other hand, the externals and practices of the church are so decayed at the present time, that it is even difficult to point out to the inquirer after truth any place where he can behold the rites of the church celebrated with the ancient solemnity.

It is only by communing with the spirit of past ages, as it is developed in the lives of the holy men of old, and in their wonderful monuments and works, that we can arrive at a just appreciation of the glories we have lost, or adopt the necessary means for their recovery.

It is now, indeed, time to break the chains of Paganism which have enslaved the Christians of the last three centuries, and diverted the noblest powers of their minds from the pursuit of truth to the reproduction of error. Almost all the researches of modern antiquaries, schools of painting, national museums and collections, have only tended to corrupt taste and poison the intellect, by setting forth classic art as the summit of excellence, and substituting mere natural and sensual productions in the place of the mystical and divine.

Before true taste and Christian feelings can be revived, all the present and popular ideas on the subject must be utterly changed. Men must learn that the period hitherto called dark and ignorant far excelled our age in wisdom, that art ceased when it is said to have been revived, that superstition was piety, and bigotry faith. The most celebrated names and characters must give place to others at present scarcely known, and the famous edifices of modern Europe sink into masses of deformity by the side of the neglected and mouldering piles of Catholic antiquity. If the renunciation of preconceived opinions on these subjects, and the consequent loss of present enjoyment derived from them, be considered as a great sacrifice, does not the new and glorious field that are opened offer far more than an equivalent? What delight to trace a race of native artists hitherto unknown, in whose despised and neglected productions the most mystical feeling and chaste execution are to be found and in whose beautiful compositions the originals of many of the most celebrated pictures of more modern schools are to be traced; what exquisite remains of the sculptor's skill lie buried under the green mounds that mark the site of once noble churches; what originality of conception and masterly execution do not the details of many rural and parochial churches exhibit!—There is no need of visiting the distant shores of Greece and Egypt to make discoveries in art. England alone abounds in hidden and unknown antiquities of surpassing interest. What madness, then, while neglecting our own religious and national types of architecture and art, to worship at the revived shrines of ancient corruption, and profane the temple of a crucified Redeemer by the architecture and emblems of heathen gods. The Pagan monster, which has ruled so long, and with such powerful sway over the intellects of mankind, is now tottering to its fall; and although its growth is too strong, and its hold too powerful to be readily over-