

would shew that his beauties are such, as not even his own hand could tarnish, nor his own foibles depreciate. Indeed, the more defects that ignorance or impertinence impute to the author, the more astonishing is his success, which, it is evident, nothing could hinder.

Between Bunyan and almost every other writer, there is this distinguishing characteristic, that nearly all his constant admirers were made so while but *children*. No other genius, as yet, has had this fascination—no other work, beside the Pilgrim, this fame. The writings which have immortalized others are such as childhood can neither relish nor comprehend. Their chief merit is that they amply gratify the maturity of intellect required to grasp them: that they come up to and exceed the expectations of cultivated and expanded minds. But, while they have “depths for the *elephant* to swim in,” they have no “shallows in which the *lamb* can wade;” whereas the pilgrim is so constructed as not only to interest minds of every age and order, but the very things which are *milk for babes* are actually *strong meat* to the same persons when they become men. What is admired as history in childhood, is admired as mystery in youth; what is admired as ingenuity in manhood, is loved as experience in old age. The pilgrim actually exercises the maturity of those minds it engaged in youth; and what was read for pleasure during many years, is read and remembered in the evening of life, both for pleasure and edification. The books which please us in childhood are in general *childish things*, which we *put away* when we become men; or, if we ever recur to them in after life, it is to wonder at the trifles which interested us in our early days. Even Watts’s *Divine Songs for Children*, of which the late Mr. Cecil said that, considering the Doctor’s talents and piety, he was not surprised at the

excellence of his other writings, but he often wondered how he could write the Hymns for children—even these are not valued by us as we advance in years, on our *own* account. They are seldom brought forward for our own improvement, however highly we may continue to think of their singular adaptation to the minds of the young. But we feel not merely an equal but a growing interest in Bunyan’s Pilgrim, after we have been many years acquainted with him. In childhood we sit, as it were, on Christian’s knee, listening to the tales of his “hair breadth escapes.” In youth we join him upon his perilous journey, to obtain directions for our own intended pilgrimage in the narrow way. Before manhood is matured, we know experimentally that “the slough of Despond and Doubting Castle” are no fictions. And even in old age, Christians are more than ever convinced of the heights and breadths and depths of Bunyan’s spiritual wisdom. The faltering tongue of decrepitude utters, as sage maxims, the very things it had lisped as amusing narrative; and we gravely utter, as *counsel* to the young, what we prattled as *curious* to our parents.

These excellencies in Bunyan are the more remarkable from their being almost unconsciously produced by their author. They are not the result of deliberative design on his part—not the fillings-up of a studied plan; but the very unity of the narrative arises more from the nature of the subject than from any previous intention in the writer. We are indebted to Bunyan himself for our knowledge of this; otherwise we might have given him credit for an acquaintance with the rules of Aristotle, so rigidly does he adhere throughout to the unities of Epic poetry. Thus he explains the origin and progress of his great work:

“When at the first I took my pen in hand,
Thus for to write, I did not understand