

## TWO FRIENDS.

Friend, let me speak to thee:  
Wealthy art thou!  
Men through their poverty  
Through want and misery  
Have sinned and sorrowed  
Often ere now.

Friend, let me speak to thee:  
Poorer art thou!  
From opportunity  
From wealth and luxury  
Men oft have borrowed  
Sorrow ere now.

Friends, will ye tell to me,  
Both of you now,  
Despite your disparity  
From each other's charity  
How oft have ye borrowed  
Comfort ere now?

S. WASHINGTON.

## A GENTLEMAN.

Of opinions, definitions, and descriptions of "a gentleman" there is no lack. If we examine our literature, from the elegant essays of Addison downwards to the discursive pages of John Ruskin, we shall find that moralists, essayists, and even poets have something to say on the subject. Yet to much that has been written we might apply the dictum of Dr. Johnson in answer to the person who told him he was no gentleman: "You are no judge" was his forcible reply. Etymological definitions are unsatisfactory and pedantic; historical standards are obsolete and inapplicable; and modern classifications are one-sided and misleading. The variety of interpretations which the word is made to bear arise mainly from a desire to incorporate in it a great deal too much, or from a restriction of its application to something incomplete and superficial.

We cannot pretend to give a delineation of every trait which forms an element of the character, and shall confine our remarks to a few leading thoughts illustrative of its nature and manifestation.

What, then, is "a gentleman"? It seems difficult to dissociate the term in many minds from a certain rank or position in life. Thus, an old poet says inquiringly:

"A gentleman!  
What, o'er the woolpack or the sugar-chest?  
Which is't, pound or yard,  
You vend your gentry by?"

And it is told of a certain literary parson that, on a pastoral visitation, he entered the dwelling of a tailor who happened to be a member of a different congregation. The latter remarked: "Although I cannot receive your visit as my minister, I shall be glad to do so as a gentleman." "When I visit gentlemen," was the snobbish reply, "I never call on tailors." Fox, in saying that only "a gentleman" could lead the House of Commons, meant a patrician; and the word was doubtless similarly understood by the commander of a regiment of light horse at Waterloo. (We presume it is unnecessary to state that it was not an English regiment.) An opportunity offered for charging the French cavalry, and an aide-de-camp came to them with an order to that effect from Wellington. Their colonel, in great surprise, objected to the enemy's strength, their cuirasses, and the consideration which had unaccountably, he said, escaped the commander-in-chief, that his regiment were all *gentlemen*. This response was carried back to the Duke, who despatched the messenger again to say that if the *gentlemen* would take post upon an eminence, which he pointed to in the rear, they would have an excellent view of the battle, and he would leave the choice of a proper time to charge entirely to their own discretion, in which he had the fullest confidence. The colonel thanked the aide-de-camp for this distinguished honour, and, followed by his gallant train with their very high plumes, was out of danger in a moment. The term acquires a certain dignity in its application to some rare old heathens in a *Life of Erasmus* prefixed to an edition of his *Colloquies* in 1699. In justifying the use of old adages by the examples of Cato, Tully, and Plutarch, the biographer quaintly remarks, "These gentlemen frequently use them."

Although the decisions of our courts of law are accepted as precedents in disputed questions, their definitions of "a gentleman" are conflicting. In the journal of the Court of Session in Scotland in 1714, for example, it is recorded that John Purdie, having been guilty of an immorality on which a Parliamentary Act of 1661 imposed a penalty of £100 "in the case of a gentleman," the Justices of the Peace fined him accordingly as he was the son of an heritor or freeholder. Purdie appealed, and suspended payment of the fine, as he was only a small heritor, and as all heritors were not gentlemen, he himself had no pretence to the title. The Lords of Session sustained the objection, and restricted the fine to £10 Scots, "because the suspender had not the face or air of a gentleman." In a case tried a few years ago in the Dublin Court of Common Pleas, the counsel, in applying to set aside an order, relied upon the fact that one of the parties in the cause was described as a gentleman, while it was proved that he was a schoolmaster, writing clerk, and collector of parish cess. One of the judges suggested that he might be a gentleman and yet fill all these situations; in reply to which the counsel quoted two cases, one in which it was held that "a description of a clerk in a government office as a gentleman is not sufficient under 17 and 18 Vic. cap. 36," and in the other that "it is not a compliance

with the statute to describe as a gentleman a witness who, though formerly an attorney, was, at the time of the attestation, acting as an attorney's clerk."

Different nationalities have ideas of the character peculiar to themselves. Perhaps the Spaniard could not more show himself a Spaniard than in his esteeming himself as good a gentleman as the king, only not so rich. The Frenchman is ostentatiously polite, but neglects the smaller courtesies. "In the abstract of politeness," remarks a traveler, "the Gaul is great—he is grand. We have seen him dash off his hat at a group of ladies every time they passed him with a frantic enthusiasm which made us tremble for the brim. We have even seen him wave it at their shadow, or after the poodle dog which followed them. Yet, alas, when the same deities appeared at *table d'hôte*, how blind, how insensible was he to their presence! How closely did he hug his well-chosen seat, though they were seatless! How zealously did he pick for himself the tit-bits and the dainties without regard or thought for their delicate palates!" The Irishman has a variety of pretensions to the character. In one part of the country, if not on visiting terms with certain county families, he is not considered a gentleman. In another district, his pedigree and list of cousins must be up to a certain standard; he must be of the "ould stock;" while, with another class, he must have the facility of getting into debt. "He a gentleman!" said one of this opinion; "why, the fellow never owed a hundred pounds in his life!" The Transatlantic type is thus sketched by Brother Jonathan himself. "We Americans," he says, "are all gentlemen by self-appointment. Our pretensions are magnificent. How far do our performances correspond! There is an idea common among our fellow-citizens that liberty consists in doing what they like on every occasion and in all companies. They think that freedom of right implies freedom of manners, and that fellow-citizenship entitles them to the free use of all that pertains to their fellow-men. They have not the most remote conception of personal individuality, and practically carry out a social communism which is neither good philosophy nor agreeable usage. We demand a large average standard of good manners from a nation which presents itself as a nation of gentlemen and ladies. Whatever may be the general average of good manners in this country, there is a greater incongruity than elsewhere between dress and conduct. Our countryman is too often known abroad by his high pretensions and low breeding."

There is a prevalent fallacy that that to be a gentleman it is essential to follow a gentlemanly occupation, from which category is, of course, excluded anything so degrading as trade or manual labour. One result of this is that the learned professions are overstocked, the gentlemanly labour market is glutted, and there is, as an inevitable result, a great and growing amount of genteel poverty, which is often sorely pressed to satisfy the vulgar necessity of living. England daily increases in wealth, and they who mainly contribute to and share in her growing prosperity are the workers in the despised pursuits of commerce and manufactures. On the one hand, we have an array of poor curates and lieutenants on half-pay, a host of briefless barristers and gray-haired civil servants, starving in their dignity and too proud to own it, "who cannot dig, and are ashamed to beg;" while on the other, there are our shrewd and energetic sons of toil amassing fortunes, buying estates, getting into Parliament, efficiently performing the duties of members of local boards, and municipal councils, and otherwise making their mark on society, and so influencing their generation as to suggest that there may be a more extensive application of the term "gentleman" than many have been willing to admit.

There is among us so much surface gentility and assumption of superiority that self-assertion is at a premium; and we "follow my leader" in paying homage to the tinsel of a showy exterior, and in bowing the knee before "success in life," as the great golden calf of modern days. Only let a man have money, and it matters not how he became possessed of it. There are not a few who hold their heads high, and who look with disdain on all in an inferior station, whose fingers all the gold in the Mint cannot wash from the slime of the mean and dishonest transactions whereby they have amassed their wealth. "Nothing is missing but conscience—nothing lost but honour." Boldly tell one of this shoddy aristocracy, however, that he is not a gentleman, and he will certainly sue you for libel. A recent writer observes that it is as obvious a perversion of the term to say that to be a gentleman is to do and be all that is excellent, as to say that he is one who never does anything; that although a man may be a good man in addition to being a gentleman, the two things are quite distinct, and that, in short, he may be a gentleman and yet be a very wicked man. We believe this to be an entire misconception of the character. A man so inconsistent as to sail under false colours and make himself agreeable for a sinister purpose, we should consider one of the most dangerous persons we could introduce into our homes or among our friends. We find a better conception of the character in a recent work of fiction. "He is certainly a gentleman," the author says of one of his heroes, "though what it is that constitutes a gentleman is an open question. It is not culture, for I have known ignorant men who were gentlemen and learned scholars who were not. It is not money, nor grace, nor goodness, nor station. It is something indefinable, like poetry."

It is common in our day to speak of gentlemen of position, gentlemen of means, gentlemen of the press, commercial and sporting gentlemen, etc. It was not in this vague sense that the word was used by James the First, who, when his nurse entreated him to make her son a gentleman, replied that he could make him a lord, but that it was out of his power to make him a gentleman. The word does not now bear the interpretation it formerly did in England. While, at one time it expressed the idea which the term *gentilhomme* does in France—where it retains its original significance to designate the members of a caste, distinct and apart—it has, in successive periods, been applied to degrees more widely extended. All classes now associate more freely than would have been tolerated in previous generations, and men no longer dress, either really or figuratively, in buckles and buckram. The garb of the Puritan—despised in the days when it was the fashion for a man to bedizen himself in ruffles and lace—is now the rule, and is appreciated for its plainness, its comfort, and its practical utility. The ordinary costume of gentlemen—free, easy, and devoid of outward show and pretence—is an index of their mental condition. They eschew stiffness, they abhor formality, they despise all seeming. Their manners, though refined, are simple.

The gentleman is a representative character—a reflection of his era. We may trace the manners of the times in their various types: in the warlike and semi-barbarous, the chivalrous and romantic, the effeminate and ornate, the soldierly and scholarly, down to the earnest, accomplished, and practical specimen in our own day. As now understood, the term is indicative of conduct rather than lineage—of character rather than position—of the intrinsic qualities that contribute to its formation as much as their manifestation in the life. A gentleman is something unique, apart from any consideration of rank, education or pursuits. There are many men of plain manners and limited means as thorough gentlemen as any noble in the land. The late Justice Talfourd, in his charge to the jury in an action wherein it was alleged that the defendant had said to the plaintiff: "Do not speak to me. I am a gentleman. You are a tradesman," took occasion to observe: "Gentleman is a term which is not confined to any station. The man of rank who deports himself with dignity and candour, the tradesman who discharges his duties with integrity, and the humblest artisan who fulfils the obligations incumbent upon him with virtue and honour are alike entitled to the name of gentleman, in preference to the man, however high his station, who indulges in ribald and offensive remarks."

We may have a correct conception of the character without being able to enter into an analysis of it. Courtesy and simplicity are its leading features. The most highly-cultivated men are ever the least conceited, and we generally find that the pedantic are men of small understanding. Chesterfield embodies its constituent elements in the term "politeness," which he defines as a benevolence in trifles, or a preference of others to ourselves in the ordinary occurrences of life. Gentleness, the foundation of the character, implies a reserved power, and is to be distinguished from weakness, as it from a passive tameness of spirit and an unreasonable compliance with the dictates or the will of others. It renounces no just right from the fear of their frown, and yields no important truth to their flattery. A prominent feature of the character is consideration, which may be said to consist in delicacy in the use of power—physical, moral, and social. Forbearance and wisdom in the exercise of this power—of that which the husband exercises over the wife, the father over his children, the teacher over his pupils, the old over the young, the strong over the weak, the master over his hands, the rich over the poor, the educated over the ignorant, the experienced over the confiding—mark the gentleman.

Bastardness is not inconsistent with the character, and we are surprised that so rare a quality is not more highly appreciated. The thoughts and feelings of the retiring in disposition are not less refined, although they may not be expressed with the gracefulness of the ready speaker or the impetuosity of the rattle-pate. This disposition frequently arises from the mind running in channels other than the commonplaces of ordinary conversation, and a consequent consciousness of inferiority in the art of pleasing. The assumption of the character is often but a simulation of the more agreeable habit of society, and only the veneer which hides depraved tastes and vicious propensities. Nothing more displays a frivolous, selfish, and vulgar mind than inattention to the simple courtesies of life, and without this even profound learning is no more than tiresome pedantry. A person of this description says he can be a gentleman when he pleases. A true gentleman never pleases to be anything else, and never, by any accident, derogates from this standard. He cannot stoop to a mean thing. He never struts in borrowed plumage. He never stabs in the dark. He is not one thing to a man's face and another behind his back. Papers not meant for his eye are sacred. Bolts and bars, locks and keys, bonds and securities, and notices to trespassers are not for him. He is a consistent observer of the second great commandment: whatever he judges to be honourable he practises towards all.

Perhaps it was because of Thackeray's keensightedness to detect, and his readiness to expose and pillory the snob that he could the more genially describe a gentleman. There are many passages in his writings which bespeak his ap-

preciation of the character. The reader will remember his famous prospectus of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which, being conducted by gentleman, was to be addressed to gentleman. "Perhaps," he says, "a gentleman is a rarer personage than some of us think for. Which of us can point out many such in his circle: men who aim are generous, whose truth is constant, whose want of meanness makes them simple, who can look the world honestly in the face with an equal manly sympathy for the great and the small! We all know a hundred whose coats are well made, and a score who have excellent manners, and one or two happy beings who are what they call in the inner circles, and have shot into the very centre and bull's-eye of fashion; but of gentleman how many? Let us take a little scrap of paper, and each make out his list."

The gentleman is portrayed in fiction after a variety of models. We intuitively revert to Sir Roger de Coverley, Captain Shandy, Colonel Newcome, Henry Esmond, John Halifax, and other well-known creations throughout our romantic literature. While we see much to admire in the delineation of these and similar characters, a careful study of the men reveals something defective. The man himself is a more interesting and satisfactory study as we find him living and moving, thinking and working, in the persons of such heroes as More, Hale, Sydney, Bishop Berkeley, Raleigh, Washington, and the late Prince Consort. It is no trifling item in the amenities of our modern civilisation that the men who hold office and dignity among us are gentlemen as a rule. We are so habituated to this state of things, that we cannot realise a nineteenth-century Bacon, or Jeffreys, or Rochester. It may be partly for this reason that a change of ministry is to us a matter of less moment than it was to our forefathers, and because we place implicit confidence in the honour and consciousness of whatever great political party may hold the reins of government for the time. It might seem invidious to name one of our eminent men before another entitled to rank in the category of gentleman; but to instance a single class of our most useful public servants, the change from the drinking and swearing times of Thurlow must be obvious to the most cursory observer of the learned occupants of the judicial bench. It is gratifying to know that we may apply with equal truth to many of the statesmen, lawyers, and leading politicians of our day what was recently said of an ex-Lord Chancellor. "In his career," said a contemporary, "not even the bitterest of his political opponents can point to a foible or detect a flaw. A grave, serious, thoughtful, and pious man, he had attained such a weight of moral worth alone, that men were in danger of overlooking the other qualities of his character. It was too much forgotten that his deep religious feeling only imparted fresh earnestness to a political creed based, as he believed, on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. To his qualities of independence and industry he adds an orator's charm, a scholar's grace, a thinker's gravity, a statesman's earnestness, and these fine benevolence of a Christian gentleman."

The gentleman is not a new character in society. He is as old as the necessities of human nature for help and its cravings for sympathy. A simple act will sometimes make the heart transparent. We have nowhere more illustrative examples than in Scripture. Never has the world seen better specimens of farmers, servants, and friends than those of whom brief notices are here recorded. Behold the patriarch parting with his nephew Lot. He did not say, as he might have done, "See! I have chosen this valley; to all the plain beside you are welcome;" but "Is not the whole land before thee? If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." See Joseph nobly cherishing his brethren, by whom he had been grievously wronged. What a fine old Hebrew gentleman is Boaz! How courteously he steps upon the scene! A man of wealth and good family, a land proprietor and influential citizen, he comes among his work people to see for himself how matters are going on, and greets them with a patriarchal grace. Can we suppose that they served him any the less faithfully for his respectful kindness? Consider, too, Paul's reply to Festus, and the apology for his smart retort to the high-priest's rude interruption of his speech. His fidelity to principle did not compromise his courtesy. He who could write the Epistle to Philemon and the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians could not but be a gentleman in the noblest sense of the word.

A Christian is therefore the highest type of gentleman; and he cannot be otherwise, because he is governed by a set of rules distinct from those by which the man of worldly policy is guided. Augustus Hare has said: "A Christian is God Almighty's gentleman. A gentleman, in the vulgar superficial understanding of the word, is the devil's Christian." Yet many of these so-called devil's Christians are estimable and lovable people, tender, affectionate, and generous. So pleasing is their representation of the character, that the Professor at the breakfast-table may be almost excused for advancing the fallacy that "good breeding is surface Christianity." Not unfrequently one may appear a gentleman in the drawing-room or the club, and another man among his workpeople or in his family. The Christian is consistently so at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, because he strives to be ever "pitiful and courteous," to "esteem others better than himself," to "please his neighbour for his good," to "carry another's burden," to "possess the love