

Cleanings.

THOUGHTS ABOUT THINKERS.

'Really, sir, I am surprised you don't see this. It's as plain as a pikestaff. You surely don't deny my facts. There they are, suborn facts, sir. You can't point out a single fallacy in the arguments I have built upon them; and yet you are not convinced. You must excuse me if I say that you must be very inattentive or sadly prejudiced not to see as I do.'

'You're very complimentary, sir. To say the honest truth, however, I was just thinking all that about you, only I did not like to put it in so many words. Some of your facts are true enough; but then they are mine as well as yours, and the rest of them are not facts at all. As to your arguments, anything more inconsequential and fallacious I never heard. But I will not reason with you any longer. It is quite useless.' And when it gets to that pass, it is useless.

It was very sad, we thought, that the disputants should get so angry and say such rude things, especially when nothing came of it; but, then, we remembered that it was one of the commonest things in the world for disputants to get both angry and rude, particularly when beaten. Very likely we have none of us taken part in a discussion in which one side—we need not say which—was so unreasonable.

One thing is very plain, that in a world where such discussions are common, there must be a great amount of diversity of opinion. In fact, there is no subject on which two opinions can be entertained about which there is only one. You cannot take up a newspaper without finding that the editor or some of his correspondents have some great mistake to rectify, or something to controvert. What spiritless things a great many books would be, if nothing were admitted into them that savored of controversy. Parliament might set to work after a late breakfast, and go home to a not very late dinner, if there did not happen to be two sides of the House, and if on both sides there did not happen to be a number of men with views of their own. No doubt, all this diversity, whilst it has its evils, has also its advantages. The earth never yields her harvests except as the result of labor, and labor is a blessing; for it strengthens the muscles and sinews, and sends the pulsations of vigorous health coursing through the frame; and so the toil of conflict which we have to endure in winning the richer harvest of truth may be intended to invigorate the intellectual man. It affords opportunity, too—said that we should be so little disposed to avail ourselves of it—for the exercise of mutual forbearance and charity.

A great many reasons might be suggested for the existence of this diversity; but at present we advert to only one of them. It is very obvious that there is not a little faulty thinking in the world. There would be far less difference of sentiment than there is, if people thought more carefully: What we wish to do, then, is to point out a few faults of thinkers.

And yet how many people never think at all! Of course they have to think, more or less, of the work and the pleasures of life; for it would be impossible to live without some such thought as that. But they never think thoughtfully and consecutively on any of the great subjects with which thoughtful minds are occupied, and which ought to be matter of deep concern to every man. It may be admitted that there are a few, here and there who have not the power of thought. They get bewildered as soon as they try to put two ideas together, or even to get fairly hold of one. They are like a Dutchman whom Washington Irving mentions, whose ideas were so square that he could not get them rounded about in his head, which had the misfortune to be round. But these are comparatively few. There are numbers who could think if they would; but they are too lazy. Give them something to enjoy, something to amuse themselves with—a dance, a song, a fete a gay party, and they are satisfied. If they must have something literary, or instructive, or useful, it must be something very easy and very pleasant; a lecture with a great many illustrations, and sparkling with wit or grinning with broad humor; a sermon, very pictorial and very exciting, and not very long; books, for there are times when even such people cannot get on without books, in the reading-made-easy sort of style—an exciting tale, or something of that kind; but nothing will they hear or read which requires thought.—What a pity that there are so many minds, gifted, to say the least, with average reasoning powers, and some of them with much

more, which should thus suffer their energies to be enfeebled when there are such large opportunities of mental culture, and when, besides, there are so many subjects on which they ought to think.

STONEWALL JACKSON.—I have never for one moment seen reason to change my opinion I expressed in the first letter I wrote from the States—that the Union, as it was, could never be restored—I am satisfied that the Free States of the North will retain and gain great advantages by the struggle if they will only set themselves at work to accomplish their destiny, not lose their time in sighing over vanished empire, or indulging abortive dreams of conquest and schemes of vengeance. During my sojourn in the States many stars of the first order have risen out of space, or fallen into the outer darkness. The watching trustful millions have hailed with delight, or witnessed with terror, the advent of a shining planet or a splendid comet, which a little observation has resolved into a watery nebula. In the Southern hemisphere, Bragg and Beauregard have given place to Lee and Jackson. In the North, McDowell has faded away before McClellan, who, having been put for a short season in eclipse by Pope, duly to culminate with increased brilliancy, has finally paled away before Burnside. The heroes of yesterday are the martyrs or outcasts of to-day, and no American General needs a slave behind him in the triumphal chariot to remind him that he is a mortal. Had I foreseen such rapid whirrs in the wheels of fortune I might have taken more note of the men who were below; but my business was not to speculate but to describe. The day I landed in Norfolk, a tall lean man, ill-dressed, in a slouching hat and wrinkled clothes, stood with his arms folded, and legs wide apart, against the wall of the hotel, looking on the ground. One of the waiters told me it was 'Professor Jackson,' and I have been plagued by suspicions, that in refusing an introduction that was offered to me, I missed an opportunity of making the acquaintance of the man of the stone walls of Winchester.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL.—In the conversation which occurred before dinner, I was amused to observe the manner in which Mr. Lincoln used the anecdotes for which he is famous. Where men bred in courts, accustomed to the world, or versed in diplomacy, would use some subterfuge, or would make a polite speech, or give a shrug of the shoulders as the means of getting out of an embarrassing position, Mr. Lincoln raises a laugh by some bold west-country anecdote, and moves off in the cloud of merriment produced by his joke. Thus, when Mr. Bates was remonstrating apparently against the appointment of some indifferent lawyer to a place of judicial importance, the President interposed with, 'Come now, Bates, he's not half as bad as you think. Besides that, I must tell you, he did me a good turn long ago. When I took to the law, I was going to court one morning, with some ten or twelve miles of bad road before me, and I had no horse. The judge overtook me in his waggon. 'Hallo, Lincoln! Are you not going to the Court-house? Come in and I'll give you a seat.' Well, I got in and the judge went on reading his papers. Presently the wagon struck a stump on one side of the road, then it hopped off to the other. I looked out and I saw the driver was jerking from side to side in his seat; so says I, 'Judge, I think your coachman has been taking a little drop too much this morning.' 'Well, I declare, Lincoln,' said he, 'I should not wonder if you are right, for he has nearly upset me half-a-dozen times since starting.' So, putting his head out of window, he shouted, 'Why, you infernal scoundrel, you are drunk!' Upon which, pulling up his horses, and turning round with great gravity, the coachman said, 'By gorra! that's the first rightful decision you have given for the last twelvemonth.' Whilst the company were laughing, the President beat a quiet retreat from the neighborhood of the Attorney-General.—Russell's Diary.

BEWARE OF BEING A 'PECULIAR MAN.'—It is in this way that you escape from the wretched narrow-mindedness which is the characteristic of every one who cultivates his speciality alone. Take any speciality; dine with a distinguished member of Parliament—the other guests all members of Parliament except yourself—you go away shrugging your shoulders. All the talk has been that of men who seem to think that there is nothing in life worth talking about but the party squabbles and jealousies of the House of Commons. Go and dine next day, with an eminent author—all the guests authors except yourself. As the wine circulates, the talk narrows to the last publica-

tions, with now and then, on the part of the least successful author present, a refining eulogium on some dead writer, in implied disparagement of some living rival. He wants to depreciate Dickens, and therefore he extols Fielding. If Fielding were alive, and Dickens were dead, how he would extol Dickens! Go the third day; dine with a trader—all the other guests being gentlemen on the stock exchange. A new speciality is before you; all the world seems circumscribed to scrip and the budget. In fine, whatever the calling, let men only cultivate that calling, and they are as narrow-minded as the Chinese, when they place on the map of the world the Celestial Empire, with all its Tartaric villages in full detail, and out of that limit makes dots and lines, with the superscription, 'Deserts unknown, inhabited by barbarians.'—Bulwer.

HOW TO GET ON.—To push on in the crowd, every male or female struggler must use his shoulder. If a better place than yours presents itself just beyond your neighbor, elbow him and take it. Look how a steadily purposed man or woman at a ball or exhibition; wherever there is a competition and a squeeze, gets the best place; the nearest the sovereign, if bent on kissing the royal hand, the closest to the grand stand; if minded to go to Ascoti, the best view and hearing of the Rev. Mr. Thumpington, when all the town is rushing to hear the exciting divine; the largest quantity of ice, champagne, cold pate, or other his or her favorite flesh-pot, if gluttonously inclined, at a supper whence hundreds of people come empty away. A woman of the world will marry her daughter and have done with her, get her carriage and be at home and asleep in bed, while a timid mama has still her girl in the nursery, or is beseeching the servants in the cloak-room to look for her shawl, with which some one else has whisked away an hour ago. What a man has to do in society is to assert himself. Is there a good place at table? Ask B., ask Mrs. C., ask everybody you know, your own way; what matter if you are considered obtrusive, provided you obtrude. By pushing steadily, ninety-nine people in a hundred will yield to you. Only command persons, and you may be pretty sure that a good number will obey. If your neighbor's foot obstructs you, stamp on it, and do you suppose he won't take it away?

TOO MUCH READING.—In an amusing article upon the 'Physicians and Surgeons of a by-gone generation,' a foreign Journal describes Abernethy conversing thus with a certain patient:—'I opine,' said he, 'that more than half your illness arises from too much reading.' On my answering that my reading was chiefly history, which amused while it instructed, he replied:—'That is no answer to my objection. At your time of life a young fellow should endeavor to strengthen his constitution, and lay in a stock of health. Besides, too much reading never yet made an able man. It is not so much the extent and amount of what we read that serves us; as what we assimilate and make our own. It is that, to use an illustration borrowed from my profession, that constitutes the chyle of the mind. I have always found that really indolent men, men of what I would call flabby intellects, are great readers. It is far easier to read than to think, to reflect or to observe; and these fellows, not having learned to think, cram themselves with the ideas or the words of others. This they call study, but it is not so. In my own profession I have observed that the greatest men were not the mere readers, but the men who observed, who reflected, who fairly thought out an idea. To learn to reflect and observe is a grand desideratum for a young man. John Hunter owed to his power of observation that fine discrimination, that keen judgment that intuitiveness which he possessed in a greater degree than any of the surgeons of his time.'

AN ESQUIMAUX RIFLEMAN.—As we were in open country, and there was no tangible object to shoot at, he made a circle in the snow of about two feet in diameter, then stepping in the centre, raised his gun perpendicular from the shoulder, and fired in the air. After firing he stepped out of the ring, and in a few seconds, to my astonishment, the bullet came down within the circle he had made. He coolly remarked, 'We want no targets to fire at;' and if a man can hold his musket with that precision as to cause the ball to return just where he stands, what need has he of a butt? But the principal reason why they thus test their shooting is an economic one. Not always being able to get bullets, they are chary of firing them away, and I have no doubt it is for the same reason that so many savage people have the 'boomarang,' or return missile.—Recollections of Labrador Life, by Lambert De Bouhieu.

RATHER 'FAST SKATING.'—'It was just twenty years ago yesterday,' says our narrator, 'that a party of us fellers went over to Cacokia Creek, on a skating match. The day was colder than ten ice-bergs all smooth as glass, and we made up our minds to have a heap of fun. Bill Berry was the leader of the crowd. He was a tall six-footer, full of pluck, and the best skater in all creation. Give Bill Berry a pair of skates and smooth sailing, and he'd make the trip to Bassin's Bay and back in twenty-four hours, only stopping long enough at Halifax to take a drink. Well, we got to the creek and fastened our skates on, and after taking a good horn from Joe Turner's flask, started off in good style, Bill Berry taking the lead. As I was telling ye, it was a dogged cold day, and so we had to skate fast to keep the blood up. There was little air holes in the ice, and every now and then we would come near going into them. My skates got loose, and I stopped to fasten 'em. Just as I had finished buckling the straps, I saw something shooting along the ice like lightning. It was Bill Berry's head. He had been going it like greased electricity, and before he knew it he was into one of them holes. The force was so great as to cut his head off against the sharp corners of the ice. 'It's all day with Bill Berry,' said I. 'And all night, too,' said Joe Turner. Just as he had got these words out of his mouth, and I looked at Bill's head, which had been going it on the ice, all at once it dropped into another hole. We run to it, and I heard Billy Berry say, 'quick boys, quick, I'll pull him out, I looked into the hole, and there, as I am a sinner, was Bill Berry's body, which had floated along under the ice, and met the head at a hole in the ice. It was so shocking cold, the head had frozen fast to the body, and we pulled Billy out as good as new. He felt a little numb at first, but after skating a while, he felt as well as the rest of us, and laughed over the joke. We went home about dusk all satisfied with the day's sport. About ten o'clock in the evening, somebody knocked at the door, and said I was wanted over to Bill Berry's. I put on my coat and went over. There lay Bill's body in one place and his head in another. His wife said that after he came home from skating, he sat down by the fire to warm himself, and while attempting to blow his nose, he threw his head into the fire place. The coroner was called that night, and the verdict of the jury was, 'that Bill Berry came to his death by skating too fast.'

ENGLISH SAILORS AS DESCRIBED BY HAWAIIAN HISTORIANS.—The description of English sailors in the native records of the Hawaiian Islands is as follows:—They have a white forehead, light eyes, strong garments, horned heads, and an incomprehensible tongue. Again, the men are white, have a loose skin, angular heads; they are Gods; they are volcanoes, for fire burns in their mouths; at their sides is a door which opens upon their treasures, and which descends deep into their bodies; into this pit they put their hands and draw forth awls, knives, iron necklaces, cloths, nails, and everything else. The records give an account of the sailors who accompanied Captain Cook. Here is a specimen, which our readers may amuse themselves by Anglicising:—'Tus' say the native, apalale bioluei, (haul away) I onaliki, valavaliki, vaiiki, pota (abroad), aloha, kahika, aloha haekas, aloha ka valine aloha ke koiki, aloha ka hale.'—The wonted sailors' greeting, 'holloa,' is traceable enough.

HIGHLAND BURYING PLACES.—An English artist, writing from about the Highlands, describes a lonely church-yard in an island on Loch-Awe. The island, he says, had been inhabited before, long ago, by a convent of Cistercian nuns. They were turned out at the Reformation, and their poor little chapel has been left for the winds to sing in ever since. Not many stones are left of it now, and its foundations lie low amongst the moss-covered tombs of the old chieftains. But the people bring their dead here yet, and lay them under the shadow of their broken walls, so that the island is a land of death, of utter repose and peace. Was it not well in barbarous mountaineers to bury their dead in lonely isles, where the foot of the marauder trampled not the grass on the grave, and where the living came not, save in sorrow, and reverently? The mainland was for the living to fight upon, to hunt upon, and to dwell upon; but this green isle was the Silent Land, the Island of the Blest. Hither the chieftains came, generation after generation, borne solemnly across the waters from their castled isles; hither they came to this defenceless one, where they still sleep securely, when their strongholds are roofless ruins; their claymores dissolved in rust; their broad lands that they fought for all their lives, sold and resold; and their descendants sent into exile to make a desert for English grouse-shooters.