

over, the most beneficial practical wisdom; how to preserve health; how to acquire riches; how to rise in honour and consideration; how to obtain the favour of God, both here and hereafter. In all these instances the press addresses itself directly to the intellect, and through it to the moral sentiments; stimulating and urging the latter into action. There is no assignable limit to the powers of the press in exciting these faculties.

The social world again is so arranged, that whenever we proceed to carry into practice the principles and knowledge which we have acquired under the guidance of our higher faculties, enjoyment to ourselves and others is the natural result. There is, first, the direct intellectual pleasure of acquiring knowledge and practising wisdom, which is great; there is, farther, the attainment of positive advantage arising naturally out of the line of conduct which the sentiments impel us to adopt.

The power of the press, therefore, in the hands of men who comprehend the constitution of the mind and of nature, and have talents and attainments adequate to give effect to their perceptions, is really boundless and inexhaustible for producing good.

Let us now advert to the powers of the press to gratify the inferior appetites and passions on which its noxious influence must essentially depend. The sensual appetites, unless combined in the individual with considerable intellect and imagination, which is rarely the case, are not capable of deriving gratification from a licentious press. The debauchee, without intellect and fancy, cares nothing for Anacreon's Songs or Sappho's Odes: He must obtain the real objects to which his propensities point, before he can appease the vulture-craving of his ferocious passions. This strikes out a vast multitude of the worst characters from the list of patrons of an immoral press; and leaves only that fraction of blackguardism which possesses talent and has received some degree of cultivation, as its great supporters. The individuals composing this class belong chiefly to the aristocracy and middle ranks, to whom the stamp duties on newspapers is not a material item of expense. The rude and uncultivated blackguards of the lower ranks will continue to spend their money on gin, and on vice in her other forms, untempted even by the cheap and ample page of printed grossness; because the latter is an unsubstantial form, and a craving appetite demands a solid substance for its gratification.

When we address an extensive mass of uncultivated men through the medium of the press we kindle up the dormant energies of each mind, not fortuitously, but according to its individual nature. In this respect the press will operate like a magnet, drawing to itself only related objects. The moral press will call into mental existence that portion of the people in whom the moral and intellectual faculties predominate; while the immoral press will add new vigor to the section which combines strong sensual desires with considerable intellect and fancy. The intellectually dull will continue in their old beaten track, laboriously honest and amiable; or grossly sensual; according to the ascendancy of the one or other class of feelings in their original constitutions.

We have the evidence of experience, that out of the mass already cultivated and brought within the sphere of the press, the vast majority prefer moral and intellectual publications. Every one of our periodicals that boasts of a very extensive circulation is essentially moral. Any one of the following publications—the Penny Magazine, with its circulation of 100,000—Chambers's Journal, with its circulation of 60,000; and the Christian Herald, of a month's standing, with its circulation of 30,000—outnumbers the whole immoral publications of the

day taken together. If the press shall in future operate as it has done in times past, we may expect that the proportion of immoral readers will never be greater than it now is; and even with this result in view, we should hail the extension of cheap publications as fraught with the greatest blessings to the nation.

The power of the press to call forth and cultivate the inferior feelings of mankind is extremely limited; and in consequence of the order of nature being constituted to favour virtue, discoveries in arts and science are incapable of being applied to any great extent in producing evil. No physiological discovery, for example has yet been made that will enable a man to commit drunkenness and gluttony without deranging his stomach and brain. No invention in art, nor discovery in science, logic, or religion, has ever succeeded in enabling highwaymen to rob with safety and honour, or thieves to swindle with public approbation. On the contrary, every new truth brought to light in physiology, enables us to ward off some disease, or more effectually to recover a patient when afflicted; and every discovery in art and science tends indefinitely to increase the means of virtuous enjoyment. How much has the invention of steam aided the higher principles of the mind, in providing cheap clothing, and numerous articles of domestic comfort for the people!

In point of fact, art, science, and literature, when enlisted in the cause of vice, necessarily tend to diminish or refine it. They cannot operate on it at all, except through the intellect; and when the intellect is fairly stimulated, the objects that solicit it on the side of virtue are so numerous and interesting, that the chances are in favour of their turning it to some extent away from the service of the antagonist powers. The utmost that the press can do for the sensualist, is to treat his imagination with vivid pictures of the sins he loves to indulge in; but the love of the sin being inherent in him, independently of his imagination, he would grossly indulge it if there was no press, instead of enjoying it in reverie and abstraction. The press may teach a man to indulge his appetites with less suffering to himself, but it can accomplish this only by instructing him in a more refined mode of indulgence; and this is a positive improvement in his condition.

It may be supposed, however, that cheap literature will cherish "sedition and blasphemy." In the church and tory signification of these terms, it will certainly do so: By enlightening the intellect and rousing the moral feelings, it will render men intolerant of every wrong, and urgent for reform of abuses both in church and state. But it will do so, only because corruption in government, and fraud and superstition in religion, are offensive to the best principles of our nature in their most improved condition. If the conductors of the press will only try either directly or indirectly to inculcate the doctrine of universal spoliation of the rich by the poor, or the extinction of religion, or its perversion to the service of crime, they will meet a signal want of success. Their publications will perish in a brief space, and for this simple but sufficient reason; such doctrines are repugnant to the natural perceptions of all well-constituted minds, and of such minds the immense majority of the reading public is composed.

We are aware that there are numerous individuals who are not destitute of talent, whose heads are full of impracticable schemes for benefitting the nation, and who expect to recruit their ranks by the aid of a cheap press: But all such persons hold out public advantage as their object, and they are in general labouring only under errors in judgment. The reme-

dy for their aberration is a wider diffusion of sound information touching the real principles which govern the production of happiness, and cheap literature may aid in accomplishing this object. In short, the more narrowly this subject is considered, the less reason there appears to fear evil consequences from instructing the people.

The Ultra Radical party consider themselves as virtually shut out from the press at present. When they obtain journals of their own in all parts of the country, we have no doubt that the first runnings of their mental activity will be somewhat hot and bitter, more deeply impregnated with passion than judgement; but though men like stimulants occasionally, they cannot live upon them. The pulled appetite calls for soberer food, and the reason must be addressed by those writers who wish to possess permanent influence. There are blackguards enough in Britain to support a few journals at present which subsist on obscenity, slander, and immorality in other forms; and there will be a few more of such journals when the price is lowered one-half, but we see no reason for thinking that the bad will be in greater proportion to the good than they are at the present moment.

MISERY OF THE IRISH.

(From "Letters on England" just published in Berlin, by the celebrated German historian Von Raumer, and translated by Mrs Austin. His visit to Britain took place in the spring of 1835.)

My mind is filled with one thought, I can entertain no other—it is that of the inexpressible wretchedness of so many thousands. In England I looked in vain for misery, and all the complaints I heard seemed to be partial and exaggerated; here, no words can express the frightful truth which everywhere meets the eye. To form an idea of it, you must see these houses—not houses but huts—not huts but hovels, mostly without windows or apertures; the same entrance, the same narrow space for men and hogs—the latter lively, sleek, and well fed; the former covered with rags, or rather hung with fragments of rags in a manner which it is impossible to conceive. If I except the respectable people in the towns, I did not see upon thousands of Irish a whole coat, a whole shirt, a whole cloak; but all in tatters, and tatters such as are no where else to be seen.

The ruins of ancient castles were pointed out to me; but how could I take any pleasure in them, while the desolate ruined huts surrounded me, and testified the distress of the present times more loudly than the others did the grandeur of the past? But then the lords were of the same race, of the same language; they were on the spot, and the people certainly not so wretched, as since the confiscations of the English conquerors. Other huts were half fallen down, but the occupants crept into the remaining half, which was not larger than a coffin for the wretched family.

When I recollect the well-fed rogues and thieves in the English prisons, I admire, notwithstanding the very natural increase of Irish criminals, the power of morality: I wonder that the whole nation does not go over and steal, in order to enjoy a new and happier existence. And then the English boast of the good treatment of their countrymen, while the innocent Irish are obliged to live worse than their cattle. In parliament they talk for years together, whether it is necessary and becoming to leave 100,000 dollars annually (£15,000) in the hands of the pastors of 526 Protestants, or 10,759 dollars to the pastors of three Protestants; while there are thousands here who scarcely know they have a soul, and know nothing of their body, except that it suffers hunger, thirst, and cold.