

been hardly opened. To such the following reflections may give a little comfort. 'But who reads all the books he takes in a journey with him? The imagination makes the preparations for departure; and the current of business, the interruptions that occur, carry off with them the uncut volumes of 'Dante, Newton, and Pascal; but it is already something to have promised to look at them; it is the little seed of the ideal which slumbers, and can slumber a long time without losing its fertilizing power. We preserve the love of letters without having the time to read, and that is the main thing.' We may console ourselves, then, with the idea, that when in the rush and bustle of life we look longingly at the backs of the books in our libraries or even in the book-shops, we are preserving the 'little seed of the ideal—the 'love of letters' which is the 'main thing.' Perhaps it may be due to this, in part, that it is almost a liberal education in itself to be brought up among books, even when they are but slightly looked into. There is a sort of atmosphere about a library; the books gather around themselves associations vague but real, almost as if the authors were there with living companionship. Few writers do not feel the stimulus of writing among books. It is one of the justifications of collecting a library around one, a thing which, in this so called *practical* age, will doubtless be more and more regarded as an extravagance.

—The last man I should have suspected of giving an opinion on the Dunkin Act was the Lord Protector of England, Oliver Cromwell. After Dunbar fight, and before he was Lord Protector, his army being quartered in Edinburgh, and Dundas still holding out in the castle, Oliver sent a civil message to the Presbyterian ministers who had taken refuge there, bidding them come out and preach to their flocks. At considerable length the ministers demurred, and one of their numerous grounds of refusal was that men of civil employment (godly corporals, to wit) do usurp their sacred calling, at which they take much umbrage. To this Oliver makes incisive answer, exposing their pretensions to a monopoly of preaching with such vigorous arguments as we can well imagine. The only passage I need quote is this: 'Your

pretended fear lest Error should step in' (the true papistical reason for keeping the scriptures from the unlearned commonalty) '*is like the man who would keep all the wine out of the country lest men should be drunk. It will be found an unjust and unwise jealousy, to deprive a man of his natural liberty upon a supposition he may abuse it. When he doth abuse it, judge.*' (Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, by T. Carlyle. Letter cxlviii., vol. 2, p. 211, edition 1857). Ah! Oliver, it seemed to your straightforward mind the very *reductio ad absurdum* to say of any given proposition,—that it resembled a course which now commends itself to so many amongst us! Would that controversialists might adopt your trenchant conclusions, or, at the very least, condense their arguments into three pithy sentences like those I have given!

—May I, a bashful visitor from the country, venture to take one of the chairs round the Table for a few moments' talk with the outspoken conversationalist who discourses so eloquently about 'the consistency of some of our religious journals?' Not that I am going to attempt the defence of those journals. That is their own matter—no easy one either, if one may judge from the samples of style set before us. But I was rather taken aback by the logic of the 'digression on the merits of the Dunkin Act.' It was so kind, certainly, to inform readers that Mr. Allen's argument 'proved to a demonstration' that said Act is 'an outrage on liberty.' Some of those less skilled in dialectics might have failed to see it. Some might even have committed the blunder of pinning their faith to the sleeve of FIDELIS's able and temperate rejoinder, with its somewhat formidable array of evidence on the workings of the Maine law and other points. But why pile Pelion on Ossa to no purpose, by going on to give 'equally unanswerable proof' that it is also 'unjust in principle'? One is reminded of the suitor, Irish of course, who, when asked by the judge to explain the cause of the non-appearance of a witness, proceeded to assign a number of reasons, the first being that the man was dead.

As if that which is an outrage on liberty were at all *likely* to be otherwise than unjust in principle. But what is the 'unanswerable proof?' 'In seeking to put down