

their ceaseless activity: "One thing is **always** to be taken for granted respecting these people, that wherever they gain a footing, or whatever be the institution to which they give birth, proselytism will be their main object." Here speaks the old moderation embodied: "Given—to begin with—baptism from the duly appointed minister, participation in customary worship;" then, "do not be deceitful, do not be idle, get rid of your bad passions, live quiet and peaceable lives, and you are Christians. It needs not that you should be careful about the religion of others, and it would be had taste and fanaticism to be righteous over much in the practice of your own." Such would be the deadly teaching and quietism to which the nation might have been reduced if this protest against earnestness had been suffered to prevail. But, happily, that which in those days was but the revival of an ancient spirit, has come to be regarded as an essential element in the Christian life. Religion need be no longer locked up in icy proprieties while the fearless enthusiasm strives for the fame or for the gold. Aggression is recognised as the Church's duty and the world's need. The "detachments of maniacs" go forth to attempt the world's winning for Christ, and society shows no disposition to control them. Their "nonsense" is now adjudged the soberest wisdom, their "melancholy" is a portion of serene and satisfying happiness; and, in deepest pity for those who scorn and slander them, they accept the brand of "madness," and vindicate it in the apostle's words: "If we be beside ourselves it is to God; if we be sober it is for your cause."

Congeniality of sentiment drew towards each other the men who were, on these matters, like-minded, that they might be mutually strengthened by communion, and mutually helpful for service. But their association was the more frequent because so many of them lived in the quiet country suburb which pointed the reviewer's allusion. Clapham was then a village proper, with pleasant lanes and field-paths, and a common, and a coach to London, and with all the traditions, and self-containedness, and sturdy pride in itself and its belongings, which a model En-

glish village ought to have; and there can be little doubt that, as Sir James Stephen puts it, "Clapham Common thought it self the best of all possible commons, and the commoners admired in each other the reflection of their own looks, and the echo of their own voices," while they were knights-errant, against every species of oppression and evil. Wilberforce, Henry Thornton, Granville, Sharpe, Stephen, the elder Grant, William Smith, John Lord Teignmouth, all these were dwellers in or upon the skirts of "the sacred village;" while it was the haunt of many others whose leisure was attracted by its quiet, or who were called to its councils when some benevolent project was to be started, or some wrong redressed, or some manifesto which embodied a great principle, made to steal gently upon the world.

The Clapham Sect will now, we trust, be better understood. All varieties of character were found among its members. It was not entirely composed of those who were one in theological belief—for William Smith was of its cabinet, and a foremost man in many of its human charities. It was not identified with any political party—for followers of Pitt and Fox were alike enrolled among its friends. It had no formal organisation, no rules, no funds, no secret oath, nor mysteries of initiation; and if it had a shibboleth, it was a word which breathed a blessing. It was simply a union of good men for worthy objects, held together by the cords of love—which are ever the mightiest bands of a man—a common hatred of injustice, by a common love of freedom, and by a penetration of spiritual sympathy which linked them in fellowship, not with each other only, but with "the one Lord and Father of them all." Of these worthies William Wilberforce was the most noticeable, both in talent and influence.—*Quiver*,

Christians, let your souls dwell upon the vanity of all things here below, till your hearts are so thoroughly convinced and persuaded of the vanity of them, as to trample upon them, and make them a footstool for Christ to get up and ride in a holy triumph in your hearts.