

The fifth commandment, besides its obvious application to the undutiful child, includes all those who strive to bring the laws into contempt, or to throw discredit on the powers that be. The preceding instances of discrepancy between the professions and practices of the common run of the higher classes, may not seem at first view to be to our purpose; but when we reflect that the strongest inducements to virtue that we hold out to the lower classes, are the hopes and fears of a future existence, is it not clear that the rich must be accused of hypocrisy by the poor, and confidence in religion materially diminished, if not extinguished? The sixth commandment "thou shalt do no murder," is one which the higher classes reserve to themselves the exclusive right of violating with impunity; I refer to duelling—offences that the law considers too trivial to be punished by a day-imprisonment, are magnified by the code of Honor into such enormous crimes, that nothing can obliterate them but the blood of the offending or offended person, *no matter which*. A sophism so outrageously absurd, that one wonders that it should still maintain its weight with many sensible, well-informed people of the present day. Poor people may pummel each other with their fists, or even with sticks, (mighty condescension!) but if they presume to use lead or steel instead of sticks, stones or bones, to repair their wounded honor, the cord, penitentiary, or exile, await them. We shall not here enter into the metaphysical discussion regarding the difference between thousands of people standing to shoot at and be shot by thousands of others in playing a hideous game called war, and two people simply shooting at each other in the not more hideous game of duel. But the latter is much more demoralizing in its influence on the lower classes generally, because it excites distrust of the equity of law, a contempt for its power, and a disregard for human life, *and soul*. We all of us recollect the melancholy issue of a duel a few years ago, in which as worthy a soldier as ever drew sword for the Queen, bit the dust, for an offence he never committed, because his mistaken sense of honor forbade his declaring the truth. When the person came to be put on his trial before the Grand Jury, it turned out that the surgeons were behind a barn, and had *seen* nothing; and the person *who had seen everything* was not forthcoming because the subpoena had been served *purposely* on another of the same name several miles off,—the bill was *ignored*. Can any one suppose, with such an evident collusion between Attorney-General, Bailiff, Grand Jury, Witnesses, and Advocate, that the murderers of Johnston, Leonard, Fennel, &c., could have many compunctions of conscience, or much fear of the gallows. We have seen of late years repeated instances, almost countless, of murder upon murder in the United States; and in no single instance has punishment followed the offence, where the assassin possessed either money or friends. *We are fast approaching the same state here*. The seventh commandment is comparatively more commonly violated by married women of the higher than of the lower classes in most civilized countries, but concubinage for very obvious

reasons, is much more confined to women of the lower classes. Men of all classes break it, in all its degrees. The eighth commandment is more commonly infringed by rich men than the sixth, because it is safer, as it may be done in a thousand ways without running any risk of falling into the fangs of the law. "Thou shalt not steal," does not mean simply, "thou shalt not take any thing openly from thy neighbour, or in such a manner as that the criminal law may lay hold on thee," but it means, "thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour openly or secretly, directly or indirectly." Some of our rich men have such stories as these circulated about them: Dives wanted an iron railing in front of his house, but did not like to pay the full price for it; he went to an importer of ironware, and choosing a pattern for a railing, ordered *verbally* a certain quantity to be imported, which was done, and he was notified of its arrival; he went to the importer and told him, that he was under a mistake, as no such order had been given. The poor importer had to keep his railing, and in the following spring, a gentleman manœuvred a bargain for the rails in such a skilful manner, that he got them at the rate currency that they cost at the manufacturers in sterling;—after the sale was completed, it turned out that the gentleman was merely an emissary of Dives. Another Dives wished for a load of hay, and not choosing to pay for it, went to the revetment wall and watched the advent of farmers across the ice with the commodity; he selected one with a simple physiognomy, and making a bargain with him, led him off home: when the hay had been discharged into the loft, the farmer demanded payment—when Dives turned fiercely on him, and said, "How now, Sirrah, you have had the audacity to sell me your hay without having gone first to the weigh-house; begone, or I will put you into jail, for I am a magistrate." As was expected, the poor fellow went off in great terror, hayless and moneyless. Dives shut up two stray cows in his stable, and milked them for three weeks; and when asked if he had any stray cows, always said "no!" until being threatened with a search-warrant, he produced them. How constantly we find tutors to estates enriching themselves at the expense of the minors; or usurer, fattening on post obits, or feeding on the miseries of their kind. With such melancholy examples before us, how can we expect the poor to be honest. The wise man has well said, that "he that maketh haste to be rich falleth into a snare." The ninth commandment infers much more than the mere swearing falsely against our neighbour in a witness-box—it also extends to listening to, and circulating, tales against our neighbours, whether true or false. Any deviation from our character as Christians should be avoided, as likely to be perverted by those who look up to us for examples. The tenth commandment in its scope is included in the preceding, as covetousness leads surely to robbery or murder. Sovereigns in their wars sanction murder and stealing; nobility and gentry encourage murder by their duels; ministers of religion encourage crime by bringing it into contempt, when they shew that its precepts have no influence upon their actions. Lawyers