

lament, because of the degeneracy of the times. They look back with regret on conditions of society, that are rapidly vanishing. They are fully persuaded, that in almost every respect, the tendency of things is downward. They do not realize that there is more change in the eyes that look at things, than in the things themselves. Both classes are mistaken, though neither are altogether wrong. The present condition of the world is the product and outgrowth of a great variety of causes that have operated in the past. A vast number of streams, rising in very different regions, have united to form the great river of modern life, on whose current we are all borne along. Among the legacies we inherit from the past are things of very different value. Some things that are fitly represented by "gold, silver, and precious stones," and some by "wood, hay, and stubble." The great conflict between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, that has jarred along the ages, and finds a recognition in all the religious systems of the world, is still surging around us, and we are actors in the fateful strife. Yet despite the croakings of those who sing their ceaseless dirges over the departure of "the good old times," I believe the world moves, moves onward, upward, heavenward; slowly but surely nearer to that time of which prophets have spoken and poets sung, where righteousness and truth shall gloriously triumph over the wrongs and falsehood, that have so long bewildered and oppressed humanity. Those who live in the memories of the past, rather than in the throbbing energy of the present, tell us that there is far less simplicity and candour of character—lest restfulness and trust—and less reverence for superiors now, than in former times. All this may be true, and yet be no just cause of complaint against the times. Every condition of society has its advantages. The very worst has some redeeming features peculiar to it. But it is absurd and unreasonable to expect to retain certain advantages, when the conditions of life in which they had their existence, have passed away. You cannot have the ermine robe of winter and the fruitful green of summer at the same time. You cannot have the grand old forest, with its leafy canopies, and the waving fields of the golden grain together. So neither can we have the credulity of ignorance, with its mental sloth, and the searching scrutiny and activity of intelligence. We cannot have the crouching homage of the broken spirited slave and the manly independence of freedom. And it is as undesirable as it is impossible. The swallow's nest in the old house might be very picturesque; but it should not prevent us pulling down the old ruin, to build the new and commodious home upon the old foundation. Feudalism and slavery developed many beautiful instances of fidelity on the part of the serf to his master;