

## Of the Vice of Lying.

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Nothing more exhibits the universality of human genius, than the facility with which men will invent a lie. All truths, we are told, have many sides, but a lie has still more, and the genius of the creature homo has shown several sides not found in nature. It is only now and then, we find a man who can chisel a good statue, or produce a fine painting, or become a renowned orator or scholar, and these only after years of unremitted toil and application; but all mankind possess a surprising skill in manufacturing a lie, and setting it off with various trappings that lend to it an air of probability and an interest. This seems to be a natural accomplishment, since for its acquisition we need pay no tuition fees. The seeds of this diabolical virtue are deeply imbedded in the heart, and spring up betimes like the weeds in our gardens. That men differ materially in this particular, and that a certain kind of education will render them more adroit and smooth in their mendacious transactions, there can be no doubt. But devoid of education, man possesses enough of this kind of erudition. Hence we can entertain no great respect for those schools where our youth are trained to acquire this debasing species of knowledge. We cannot entertain a high degree of respect for that pliable, garrulous merchant, whose conscience yields to his interest, and whose clerks are to be modelled after his own character.

Nor is that circle where dissimulation is taught by practice if not by precept, less deserving of the reprobation of all good men. Worst of all is the family school where the rurseling is reared to tell lipping lies. Such habits, embraced in early childhood and consecrated by parental influence or example, infect the entire character and poison the humanity that approaches it.

And when once an adept in this practice, what a curious creature is the liar! Were it not for the multiplicity

of this species of animals, we should be inclined to catch the liar, cage him, and turn him over to Barnum to be exhibited as a rare natural curiosity. And how would he excite wonder and amazement above the conder of the Andes, or the brindled lion of the desert! What chivalry does he exhibit! What miracles has he wrought, what risks run and hairbreadth escapes made! He can rehearse a record and tell of a life, no man has experienced—he has been a great tourist, has seen many lands, and enjoys an intimate acquaintance with most of the notable men of the time. In all his sight seeing, too, he happened to be peculiarly fortunate—arrived at the right time—had the best view, and all things were arranged so exactly to his liking that we are inclined to think he lived in a peculiar day.

But this wonderful character, so generally diffused through society, deserves especial notice. We have represented it as a universal proclivity in human nature—a spontaneous tendency of the species; not that all men are gross, back door liars. A lie has many shades, reaching all the way from pure, unmixed truth, to a point-blank falsehood intent. How is it that he makes out to become a liar? The achievement is not made at once. The chasm, stretching from pure truth to the domains of unmixed falsehood, is broad, and not to be leaped at a bound. About the regions of falsehood there are many sinuosities, spiral ways, that would baffle the keen scent of a lawyer. It is amid these and by degrees that the searcher for truth becomes bewildered and ruined. He ceases to love truth—fails to utter the conceptions of his own mind, and substitutes a defective picture for the one painted upon the mental canvass. And this may be accomplished in various ways. This picture is seldom totally changed at once, since that would defeat the purpose of the liar. but is so far modified as completely to caricature and belie the original.

Truth is not put away, but so com-