

be wanting." Let us but be true to our principles, to our surroundings, and to ourselves, and then we may employ our time to more profit; while we shall lessen the occasion, if, indeed, such exists, of mourning over the degeneracy of the age.

Surely, too, there is yet room—and even a broader basis for literature at present than ever before. Hume tells us that Addison's definition of good writing, viz: "to write sentiments which are natural without being obvious," is the most just definition of it that can be given; so, says Horace, we should write so that any one reading would think he could write the same things, but in attempting it would utterly fail, "*rudet multum et frustra que laboret.*") And truly the things most natural and most important, though often the least obvious, are those which occur around and within us every day. To "act in the living present" is the chief duty of any individual; and to do this in any age is—as far concerns ourselves—to enable it. Sufficient for any age is its own good and evil, and if we employ aright our own, we shall not need to call up to its assistance the spectres of an imaginary golden age in the past, nor an anticipated millenium in the distant future.

Yet men chase after thistledown themselves, while they accuse the age of trifling. If we cannot with our feeble rush-light discover the workings of the past, nor peer into the mysteries of the cloud-enveloped future; then we had better leave chaos, and coming back to cosmos, see if here we cannot find enough of thought to satisfy our intellectual craving, enough of work to give our hands honest employment.

Those, again, who have been accustomed to bend their necks to the yoke of cast-iron rule, mourn over the manifest breaking away from the old, arbitrary standards of moral and religious authority. All must be lost, say they, if these foundations be abandoned. Rather would we hope that this digression, this seemingly incoming of lawlessness may be attended by more happy results.

Society longs to be delivered from the

bondage of custom, of caste, and of a venal submission to creeds, which can never be progressive, and the influence of which has been almost universally opposed to the progress and development of truth.

But as restraints are gradually removed, new forces are set free; ambition becomes a strong motive power, and bears with it not only a desire for self-aggrandizement, but also a much more commendable love of research and investigation, and demands more intense personal application, and a freer individuality.

New fields of thought and research are opening upon all sides. Harvests of truth waving in the sunlight of advancing science, call for earnest, honest, individual effort, in order that they may be garnered into the treasure-house of useful knowledge. The world-spirit is waking up to the cultivation of a more extended thought. Humanity is shaking off the shackles of its bondage, and asserting its right to breathe the pure atmosphere, and enjoy the sunshine of earth; and to use its God-given powers in the pursuit of a higher, nobler, more universal manhood. Nor has the limit yet been reached; for as when we look through the most powerful telescope, and the eye reaches far into the great deeps of space, the grand prospective only inables us to conceive of a broader universe beyond; so each attainment gained in the moral or mental universe, but widens the area of possible attainment.

Moreover it is not a sufficient objection to this breaking up of old conservative dogmas, that carried to the extreme, it might land the race in the vortex of fanaticism, socialism or free love. That such tendencies are always visible when unrestricted freedom is given cannot be denied; but a freedom bounded only by that necessity which is fixed in the laws of nature is the right of every individual, for as investigators in the realm of thought as well as morals "we are called into liberty," and without liberty none can attain to eminence, nor even to true manhood, and with quite as much reason might we shut