

so extremes cannot exist without a mean, and this case is no exception to the general rule.

But some say that the times are entirely mechanical; there is now no spontaneous development of thought into action, no unconscious out-flow, as of the stream from the fountain. To such a one we answer: Who made thee a judge of thy literary brethren? Or do you not decry your contemporaries merely that you yourselves may appear in more magnificent proportions beside your diminished neighbours? Depend upon it, this age, base though it may be, is yet too discriminating to allow your little game to succeed; you will add but few cubits to your stature by thus playing the sycophant. If you cannot rise to literary eminence without making stepping-stones of your fellows, then remain on the plane where nature fitted you to act, and you will do more credit to yourself and contribute more to the benefit of your fellow man. Of all the abject crowd of flatterers, slanderers, and thieves, the literary parasite is the most ignoble.

But yet others (and they are not a few) take up their lamentation and assert that not only is originality wanting at present, but it is an impossibility in the age. All the realm of possible literature, say they, has been overrun, all the thought of any value has been culled, and to commit to paper anything that remains would be but waste of ink and muscle, not to speak of the tremendous racking of the brain, which gathering together these scattered fragments and so concentrating them as to be able to discern their shape and bearing would necessitate.

Truly Homer began to write of chivalry, and all that was left has been fully unfolded in the tales of Ivanhoe and Count Robert; or Orpheus thrummed the lowest chord in the scale of music, and it has been carried up through its gradations by such as Mozart and Beethoven, till now the highest note has been touched by Florence Nightingale, and the sweet muse of melody only awaits her demise to escape with her to more congenial climes. Metaphysics too, which rose with Plato and

Aristotle, must have followed Hume and Stuart Mill into an obscurity which to themselves was dark indeed.

At length we have reached the point where

"Thinking is but an idle waste of thought,  
And naught is everything and everything is naught."

Thus our moralist unwittingly becomes a nihilist. Henceforth we must content ourselves to feed, like the prodigal, on husks, and be cheered by no more heavenly music than that which echoes from the foot-falls of retiring ages, as they tread down the iron pavement of the past. Yea, though Milton and Dante sought material for their creations beyond the bounds of our globe, yet, forsooth, they must have exhausted all the material to be found below or above; or else perchance, the dog of Pluto, or Peter with his bundle of keys, have received instructions not to permit any more such intruders to enter their abodes, and bear tales away to other climes.

(Concluded in next.)

### Mosaics.

The bird of wisdom flies low and seeks his food under hedges; the eagle himself would be starved if he always soared aloft against the sun.—LANDOR.

Do not imagine that I consider as *vulgar* those only of the poor and humble classes; but all who are *ignorant*, even be they lords or princes, they must be classed under the denomination *vulgar*.—CERVANTES.

In all disputes, as much as there is of passion, so much there is of nothing to the purpose; for then reason, like a bad hound, speeds upon a false scent, and forsakes the question first started.—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

The man who takes his beer three times a day, and spends one-tenth of his time at work, may stand up and fold his arms and say he is as good as the next man. Yes, but that depends upon who the next man is.—BEECHER.