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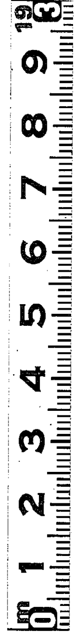

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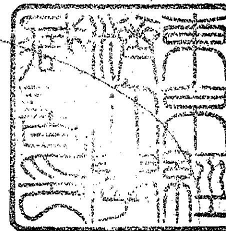
東京経済大学図書館

QUESTIONS

IN

POLITICAL ECONOMY,

&c. &c.



QUESTIONS

IN

POLITICAL ECONOMY, POLITICS, MORALS, METAPHYSICS, POLITE LITERATURE,

AND

OTHER BRANCHES OF KNOWLEDGE;

FOR

Discussion in Literary Societies, or for Private Study.

WITH

REMARKS UNDER EACH QUESTION, ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF ESSAYS

ON THE

FORMATION AND PUBLICATION OF OPINIONS.

Baily

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PREFACE.

THE following pages were originally intended for the use of those young men, who, after performing the daily duties of their professions, meet together for the purpose of intellectual improvement. Societies of this kind, it is believed, are now become numerous, and it was thought, that a collection of subjects for conversation, accompanied by brief explanatory remarks, and references to such books as are commonly to be found in libraries, might relieve them from the difficulty of supplying topics on the spur of the moment; or from the trouble of searching for them at an ex-

pense of time, which individuals of this class have it seldom in their power to bestow.

It is hoped, however, that the volume will prove useful to other classes, particularly general readers, by furnishing them with brief notices of a variety of interesting subjects, as well as directing them to sources where they may find fuller information; nor will it, perhaps, be altogether unworthy of the attention of the philosopher and man of learning, inasmuch as it presents, in a definite and distinct form, many questions which must have frequently occupied their attention; and brings together the various opinions of various authors, the mere juxtaposition of which is often sufficient to excite in such minds the most novel and striking views. There is something, at times, exceedingly serviceable in having a question disencumbered of the numerous related and collateral inquiries in which it is enveloped in a regular systematic treatise, and

exhibited naked and solitary to the apprehension. Hence an elementary work, intended for the novice, is often the best starting ground for an original mind. Cursory as its view of each question necessarily is, the present volume, it is hoped, may aspire to be regarded, in this way, as a collection of hints for the understanding, or materials for thought.

Having said thus much of the design of the work, the author will venture a few remarks on the execution. A slight inspection of the volume will show, that it is chiefly formed of extracts from writers, who have expressly treated or incidentally touched upon the several topics introduced. It would have been easy for the author to give an air of greater unity and originality to it by translating the sentiments of these writers into his own language. He may assert, indeed, that this would have been a pleasanter and not a much

longer task, than the servile transcription of the periods of others; but he conceives, that, although it might have conduced to his own reputation, it would have impaired the value and utility of his book. On the plan pursued, not only will it answer the same purpose of information as if it had been one homogeneous composition, but it will also serve to introduce the young reader to an acquaintance with the different styles and modes of thinking of some of the first philosophical writers in the English language.

The extracts from Locke, Shaftesbury, Hume, Dr. Johnson, Adam Smith, Paley, Dugald Stewart, Professor Playfair, Dr. Brown, Malthus, Mill, Ricardo, and others, are many of them remarkable for the graces of their style, the energy of their sentiments, or the acuteness and ingenuity of their reasoning; and it is surely better to have the *ipsissima*

verba of writers of this character, than the same matter shaped into the uniformity of one style.

At the outset, it was the intention of the author to state the opinions of others without offering any of his own; but partly seduced by the interest of the questions, which came before him, and partly led on by the impression, that the book would not be less attractive if the tone of the judge were occasionally dropped for that of the advocate, he has often mingled in the debate, and taken the liberty, sometimes of suggesting arguments for the consideration of the inquirer, and sometimes of introducing an explicit declaration of his own sentiments. What he has done in this way is sufficient, he hopes, to redeem the work from the character of a mere compilation.

It is perhaps unnecessary to guard his readers against the supposition, that he intended

to furnish a complete account of whatever has been written on the several questions laid before them. He has aimed only at presenting them with *some* information, more or less copious, under each inquiry, referring them in most instances to more extensive mines of knowledge, and endeavouring, in all cases of importance, to bring his explanations down to the present time, and the existing state of the controversy under review.

The author intended at one time to introduce a class of questions in the physical sciences, for which he had collected some materials; but, on reconsideration, he abandoned that part of his design, principally on the ground, that those points in physical science, on which any controversy can be raised, require such an acquaintance with the subject as can be expected only from the first men of the times. Our knowledge of the material universe ad-

vances with a sure and steady step, and it is in general only at the farthest point of the progress, reached perhaps by none but the most eminent philosophers, that there is room for doubt and hesitation. It is therefore not easy to find questions, in these sciences, admitting of more than one solution, except such as lie far beyond the range of ordinary minds, and are on that account scarcely suitable for general discussion. It is different with moral and political inquiries, for which the requisite preliminary knowledge is more universally possessed, and where many difficulties arise simply from the vagueness and ambiguity of terms, in the accurate analysis and more correct use of which no man of sound understanding needs despair of some degree of success.

In selecting his questions, the author has endeavoured to avoid all that are trifling and unmeaning. What he has admitted vary of

course in importance, but they are most of them, he thinks, such as have either a direct bearing on human affairs, or a tendency to expand and invigorate the understanding; or, lastly, such as have been raised into consequence by the interest and controversy lavished upon them.

MAY, 1823.

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Lately published, by the same Author, in crown octavo, price 8s.

ESSAYS

ON THE

FORMATION AND PUBLICATION OF OPINIONS,

AND

ON OTHER SUBJECTS.

PART I.

QUESTIONS

IN

POLITICS AND POLITICAL ECONOMY.

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ON POLITICS AND POLITICAL ECONOMY.

QUESTION I.

WHAT DEGREE OF PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE OUGHT TO BE ASCRIBED TO THE SCIENCE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY?

A WRITER in the Quarterly Review, No. 29, considers the subjects of population, bullion, and corn laws, in the same light as the scholastic questions of the middle ages; and puts marks of admiration to them, expressive of his utter astonishment, that such perishable stuff should engage any portion of the public

attention. On this Mr. Malthus observes, that "in the very practical science of political economy, perhaps it might be difficult to mention three subjects more practical than those unfortunately selected for a comparison with scholastic questions. But, in fact," he continues, "most of the subjects which belong to it are peculiarly applicable to the common concerns of mankind. What shall we say of all the questions relating to taxation, various and extensive as they are? It will hardly be denied that they come home to the business and bosoms of mankind. What shall we say of the laws which regulate exchangeable value, or every act of purchase and exchange which takes place in our markets? What of the laws which regulate the profits of stock, the interest of money, the rent of land, the value of the precious metals in different countries, the rates of exchange, &c. &c.?

"The study of the laws of nature is, in all its branches, interesting. Even those physical laws, by which the more distant parts of the universe are governed, and over which, of

course, it is impossible for man to have the slightest influence, are yet noble and rational objects of curiosity; but the laws, which regulate the movements of human society, have an infinitely stronger claim to our attention, both because they relate to objects about which we are daily and hourly conversant, and because their effects are continually modified by human interference."—Principles of Political Economy, Introduction, p. 12.

To the opinion of the London critic, we may oppose also that of a writer in a rival publication. "Political economy," says an Edinburgh reviewer, "when considered in all its bearings, is one of the most important and useful branches of science. It has a connexion more or less intimate with almost every question of politics and morals; and, whether with respect to the conduct of private life, or to the administration of public affairs, cases are perpetually occurring, in which, without a competent knowledge of its principles, it is impossible either to judge correctly, or to act with wisdom. Benevolence and charity, when not

under the guidance of economical science, frequently degenerate into ministers of mischief, aggravating the misery they endeavour to relieve, and resembling in their effects those splendid but baneful meteors, which throw a deceitful lustre over the disorder they create."

To feel the practical importance of political economy, it is indeed only necessary to reflect, that in numerous cases affecting national wealth and prosperity we cannot remain idle, we must *act;* and this science is only another name for an investigation into those modes of action which are beneficial. The controversy, therefore, on the utility of political economy may be reduced to the question, whether it is better to act without any general deductions and connected principles, or with all the information and comprehensiveness of view, which systematic observation and reflection can supply?

QUESTION II.

IS MR. MALTHUS'S THEORY OF POPULATION FOUNDED IN TRUTH?

THIS theory has been adopted by most of our eminent political writers, and will be found stated at full length, and supported with great ability, in the "Essay on the Principle of Population," by the distinguished author, whose name is now inseparably connected with it. His book has called forth a number of replies of various merit, amongst which the following may be enumerated, for the satisfaction of the inquirer:—

The Principles of Population and Production, by J. Weyland.

An Inquiry into the Principle of Population, by James Grahame.

The Happiness of States, or an Inquiry concerning Population, &c., by S. Gray.

The Principles of Population and Production, by George Purves, L.L. D.

But perhaps the most formidable antagonist of Mr. Malthus is the celebrated author of "Political Justice," whose speculations first gave rise to the new theory, and who has recently published, "An Inquiry into the Power of Increase in the Numbers of Mankind." Mr. Godwin attacks the very foundation of his opponent's doctrine, endeavouring to show, that the rate of increase by procreation only has never been in any country what Mr. Malthus assumes it to be; that in the instance of America, the increase has been chiefly from immigration; and that, although in newly settled countries population may multiply more rapidly than in old ones, even by procreation, yet it is owing to the circumstance of the settlers being for the most part of an age to propagate their species; while in an old country the population contains a considerable proportion of children and superannuated men and women.

Whatever may be the soundness of Mr. Godwin's arguments, of the scope of which this is necessarily a very imperfect sketch, it is not to be doubted that his book, even by its errors, has thrown considerable light on the subject, and will be a great instrument in setting the question at rest.

One of the clearest and most concise explanations of Mr. Malthus's theory, which we recollect to have met with, is the following, extracted from the Quarterly Review:—

"Population, in favourable circumstances, tends to increase; and whatever addition is made by that increase, has in itself a power and a perpetual stimulus to exert the power of still further increase. But if the fertility of any spot of earth be, by any favourable circumstances, increased, the addition made by that increase has no power or tendency in itself to produce a further increase of fertility. Thus, if population be doubled, the population so doubled has a tendency to double itself; but doubled fertility has no such tendency to double in itself. The doubled fertility cannot

in itself be a cause of quadrupled fertility; the doubled population can be a cause of quadrupled population, and has besides, in itself, a strong stimulus to become so. The grand deductions from this principle are, that the natural tendency of population is to increase faster than the means for its support, and that therefore the efforts of nations, and the enactments of legislatures, should be directed to increase the productiveness of their soil, which has no natural tendency to increase itself; and that, having done this, we may safely rely on a proportionate increase of population, which *has* a natural power and stimulus for self-increase." No. 51, p. 153.

It may be objected to this statement, that *food* has the same tendency in itself to increase that population has, since food consists of vegetables and animals, in which the power of self-increase is as great and active as in man. This objection is urged by Mr. Booth, the coadjutor of Godwin. "As far," says he, "as animals constitute the food of man, its increase must be in the same sort of series as that of

human beings; and, if a geometrical ratio exist any where, it is surely in the vegetable produce of the soil."—"If America have doubled its inhabitants every twenty-five years, the prepared food must have increased in equal proportion, for all the inhabitants have plenty, and are able to export grain to foreign countries. In the only country, then, where Mr. Malthus has discovered any ratio of increase of human population, the same, if not a greater, ratio has been observed in the increase of the means of subsistence." To this argument the Quarterly reviewer brings a triumphant reply. "In the first of these passages," he says, "fecundity is confounded with fertility; and, in the second, the increased quantity of land brought into cultivation is confounded with increased fertility in the original tract. The fecundity of plants and animals, like that of the human species, seems, indeed, unbounded by any thing but the power of the earth to supply them: and, unless the fertility of the soil be augmented, the fecundity of all that live on it can only tend to crowd the whole, and prevent any from coming

to perfection. If all the corn, produced on an acre of wheat, were sown on that acre, the produce would be mere rank grass, where not a grain would be ripened. And if all the stock of a field, with the young of this year, were confined to the same unimproved field the next, the whole would either die of hunger, or the old would be emaciated skeletons, and the young stunted dwarfs. It is idle, therefore, to talk of the fecundity of plants and animals as a supply for increasing population, unless there be provided an increased fertility, or increased extent of soil, proportioned to the demands on that fecundity." The critic then proceeds to show, that, in the instance of America, the power of supporting an increased population is owing, not to the increased fertility of the same tracts, but to the quantity of new lands brought into cultivation. "The example of North America, therefore, instead of proving, according to Mr. Booth, a similar ratio in the increase of human population and of the means of subsistence, is one of the most conspicuous examples of population outstripping

fertility, and casting off its swarms in search of new lands to be reclaimed from the wilderness."

The reader will find a brief and clear elucidation of the present question in Mr. Mills's recent work, entitled, "Elements of Political Economy," chap. ii. It may be doubted, however, whether he has chosen the most striking set of arguments to support the doctrine, although they are really those on which it will ultimately be found to rest.

QUESTION III.

ARE THE ENGLISH POOR LAWS CONSISTENT WITH SOUND POLICY?

THE rapid augmentation of the poor-rates throughout England has forcibly drawn the attention of all classes to the soundness of this part of our domestic system. Some of the strongest arguments against it are derived from Mr. Malthus's theory of population; and, if that theory could be proved to be erroneous, the state of the question would be materially altered.

"The pernicious tendency of these laws," says Ricardo, "is no longer a mystery, since it has been fully developed by the able hand of Mr. Malthus, and every friend to the poor must ardently wish for their abolition."—"The principle of gravitation," he continues, "is not more certain than the tendency of such

laws to change wealth and power into misery and weakness; to call away the exertions of labour from every object, except that of providing mere subsistence; to confound all intellectual distinction; to busy the mind continually in supplying the body's wants; until at last all classes should be infected with the plague of universal poverty."—Principles of Political Economy and Taxation, chap. v.

The reader may see a full explanation of the manner in which the theory of population affects the present question in Mr. Malthus's Essay, book iii, chap. v, vi, vii.

Dr. Currie, in his Life of Burns, contrasting the English and Scottish peasantry, makes the following observations on this subject, in which the popular objections to the poor laws are stated with force and clearness.

"The information and religious education of the peasantry of Scotland promote sedateness of conduct, and habits of thought and reflection. These good qualities are not counteracted by the establishment of poor laws, which, while they reflect credit on the benevo-

lence, detract from the wisdom of the English legislature. To make a legal provision for the inevitable distresses of the poor, who, by age or disease, are rendered incapable of labour, may indeed seem an indispensable duty of society; and if, in the execution of a plan for this purpose, a distinction could be introduced, so as to exclude from its benefits those whose sufferings are produced by idleness or profligacy, such an institution would perhaps be as rational as humane. But to lay a general tax on property for the support of poverty, from whatever cause proceeding, is a measure full of danger. It must operate in a considerable degree as a bounty on idleness, and a duty on industry. It takes away from vice and indolence the prospect of their most dreaded consequences, and from virtue and industry their peculiar sanctions. In many cases it must render the rise in the price of labour, not a blessing, but a curse to the labourer, who, if there be an excess in what he earns beyond his immediate necessities, may be expected to devote this excess to his present gratification,

trusting to the provision made by the law for his own and his family's support, should disease suspend, or death terminate his labours. Happily, in Scotland, the same legislature which established a system of instruction for the poor resisted the introduction of a legal provision for the support of poverty; what they granted on the one hand, and what they refused on the other, was equally favourable to industry and good morals: and hence it will not appear surprising, if the Scottish peasantry have a more than usual share of prudence and reflection, if they approach nearer than persons of their order usually do to the definition of a man, that of 'a being who looks before and after.'"

Notwithstanding these high authorities, able champions are not wanting on the opposite side. Bentham, in his excellent work, entitled, Traités de Legislation Civile et Pénale, contends, that it may be laid down as a general principle, that the legislature ought to establish a regular contribution for the wants

of the poor, those only being understood by the term who are in absolute want of necessaries. He arrives at this conclusion by considering, that, amongst the poor, economy is an insufficient resource against the accidents of fortune, the revolutions of trade, natural calamities, and, above all, sickness; because there are numbers who can procure at the utmost only a bare subsistence, and others, whose most strenuous exertions cannot even do that; and as to the rest, they will often fall into distress, without a degree of prudence and foresight scarcely to be expected from people of their condition. He considers voluntary contributions as a very imperfect remedy for the unavoidable evils of indigence, on account of their uncertainty, the inequality of the burthen, and the random and partial manner in which they are distributed. See tome i, p. 202.

In addition to the works already cited, we may refer the reader to "An Inquiry into the Nature of Benevolence, chiefly with a view to elucidate the Principles of the Poor Laws,

and to show their Immoral Tendency," by J. E. Bicheno. In this tract is a brief, but instructive history of the establishment of these laws, and of the successive alterations which they have undergone.

QUESTION IV.

IS A NATION REALLY ENRICHED BY ITS FOREIGN COMMERCE?

THAT a nation is enriched by its foreign commerce may at first sight appear to admit of no dispute. The contrary, however, was very strenuously maintained a few years ago by a Mr. Spence, in a pamphlet, entitled, Britain Independent of Commerce, which possessed plausibility enough to convert many to its opinions, and amongst the rest Mr. Cobbett, who highly praised it, and supported its doctrines in his Political Register. A most able reply to it, under the title of Commerce Defended: an Answer to the Arguments by which Mr. Spence, Mr. Cobbett, and others have attempted to prove, that Commerce is not a Source of National Wealth, was published by Mr. Mill, the historian of India, and the au-

thor of an excellent elementary work on Political Economy, to which we have already had occasion to refer. This pamphlet may be recommended to the student in economical science, not only as a full and masterly exposition of the question in dispute, but as throwing considerable light on the general sources of the wealth of nations, and other interesting topics. Spence's pamphlet attracted the notice of several of the reviews, and particularly that of the Edinburgh. See vol. xi, p. 429, *et seq.*

On this subject we may also refer to a recently published work, of no common merit, entitled, An Essay on the Production of Wealth, by R. Torrens, where (in chap. vi) an excellent explanation is given of the beneficial effects of commerce. He ably unfolds the great advantages which peculiarly attend the commercial intercourse of new and old countries, a topic deserving of especial consideration. The reader may likewise consult the third chapter of Mill's Elements of Political Economy above referred to. He will there find the author maintaining a position, which

may at first startle a mind trained in the old mercantile prejudices. It is, that "the commodities imported are the cause of the benefits derived from a foreign trade."—"When one country exchanges, in other words, when one country traffics with another, the whole of its advantage consists in the commodities *imported.* It benefits by the importation, and by nothing else."

To the question, how we are enriched by trade, another able writer gives the following answer:—

"The mind and faculties of man are constantly engaged in pursuit of his own happiness, and in multiplying the means of subsistence, comfort, and enjoyment. Trade, which effects the exchange of a part of the productions of the soil, industry, and talent of any country, against those of the soil, industry, and talent of all other countries, is the great instrument of multiplying these means. By the aid of this exchange, not only those natural productions, which Providence has distributed in abundance in one portion of the globe, and re-

fused to some other, are rendered common to all; but the soil of every country, and of every portion of every country, is left at liberty to be cultivated principally, or wholly, if necessary, in raising those productions for which it is best calculated and adapted; those which, by experience, it has been found to afford of the best quality, in the greatest abundance, and at the least expense of capital and labour. Labour, or capital, employed in manufactures, is enabled to avail itself of local situations and natural advantages (for instance, a stream or a coal mine), and to adapt itself exclusively to those pursuits in which, from any peculiar disposition, dexterity, ingenuity, or fortuitous discovery, the people of any particular country, or any particular part of them, may excel. The advantage derived from the division of labour is well known. What is effected by the operation of that principle, for a single undertaking, is, by the aid of commerce, effected for the whole world. Commerce enables the population of each separate district to make the most of its peculiar advantages, whether

derived from nature, or acquired by the application of industry, talent, and capital; to make the most of them for its own consumption; leaving, at the same time, the greatest possible remainder to be given in exchange for any other commodities produced more easily, more abundantly, or of better quality, in other districts of the world. It is *thus* that a country is enriched by commerce." The Question concerning the Depreciation of our Currency stated and examined, by W. Huskisson, Esq. M. P. Seventh edition, p. 61, *et seq.*

QUESTION V.

IS IT SOUND POLICY IN ANY GOVERNMENT TO IMPOSE RESTRAINTS ON THE IMPORTATION OF FOREIGN GOODS, WITH THE VIEW OF PROTECTING DOMESTIC MANUFACTURES?

Many readers may think, that this question has long since been satisfactorily settled; but the fact is, that, however the most eminent political writers may agree about it, there are numbers in the commercial world who regard the restrictive system as a source of real wealth to the country which adopts it. In the United States of America, strenuous exertions have been recently made to impress the government and the people with the salutary effects of giving encouragement to their own infant manufactures, or protecting them from competition

by prohibitions, or excessive duties on foreign articles of the same kind; and the advocates of this system have pointed to England as an example of the wealth which it has produced. They have urged upon the attention of their countrymen, that although English writers have declaimed against bounties, and monopolies, and protecting duties, yet that the government itself has pertinaciously adhered to them; and that it appeared to be the policy of these islanders to hold out one doctrine to other countries, while they themselves cunningly acted upon another.

In the consideration of the present question, it is useful to keep in view the distinction between the policy of a free trade, abstractedly considered, and the policy of establishing it in a country where the contrary system has long existed, and has drawn capital and industry into channels, from which it would produce much evil to remove them. It is, in fact, on the latter point, or the application of the doctrine, that controversy generally arises, many being willing to admit the abstract principle,

who are determinedly opposed to every measure for putting it in practice. It is a great point gained, however, to have the abstract principle admitted; to have an accordance of opinion as to what would be the best system, if circumstances left us free to choose. "A perfect freedom of trade," says Malthus, "is a vision, which it is to be feared can never be realized. But still it should be our object to make as near approaches to it as we can. It should always be considered as the great general rule. And whenever any deviations from it are proposed, those who propose them are bound clearly to make out the exception."

This whole subject has been so ably explained by Adam Smith, in the fourth book of his Wealth of Nations, that subsequent writers have had little else to do than repeat his arguments, and illustrate his positions. One simple proposition is, in truth, sufficient to decide the question, and is the basis of all the reasonings of our great economist upon it. It is, "that in every country it always is, and must be, the interest of the great body of the people to

buy whatever they want of those who sell it cheapest."

The present topic is, of course, more or less fully treated of in almost all works on Political Economy; and it is unnecessary here to make particular references to the works of Say, Malthus, Ricardo, Torrens, Mill, and others. Amongst other treatises, the reader may consult a pamphlet, entitled, Observations on the Restrictive and Prohibitory Commercial System, from the MSS of Jeremy Bentham, Esq., in which there are various arguments, economical, moral, and political, urged in favour of a free trade.

QUESTION VI.

OUGHT THERE TO BE ANY LEGISLATIVE INTERFERENCE WITH THE IMPORTATION OR EXPORTATION OF CORN?

In the preceding question, respecting restraints on importation, we purposely limited the inquiry to manufactured goods, because the subject of a free trade in corn is of a magnitude and importance to require a separate discussion, and involves considerations peculiar to itself. Of a question so much agitated, and abounding in so many collateral topics, it would not be easy, within our confined limits, to bring a condensed exposition before the eye of the reader. We select, however, a passage from Say, which touches upon the most popular and material points of the controversy.

"The substance of the argument of the prohibitionists may be reduced to this: that it is expedient to encourage domestic agriculture, even at the expense of the consumer, to avoid the risk of starvation by external means; which is seriously to be apprehended on two occasions in particular: first, when the power or influence of a belligerent is able to intercept or check the import, which might become necessary; secondly, when the corn-growing countries themselves experience a scarcity, and are obliged to retain the whole of their crops for their own subsistence.

"It was replied by the partisans of a free trade, that, if England were to become a regular and constant importer of grain, not one, but many foreign countries would grow into a habit of supplying her: the raising of corn for her market in Poland, Spain, Barbary, and North America, would be more extensively practised, and the sale of their produce would become equally indispensable to them, as the purchase would be to England: that even Buonaparte, the most bitter enemy England

had ever encountered, had taken her money for the license to export corn: that crops never fail at the same time all over the world; and that an extensive commerce of grain would lead to the formation of large stores and depôts, which will offer the best possible security against the recurrence of scarcity; and that, accordingly, as they asserted, there are no countries less subject to that calamity, or even to violent fluctuations of price, than those that grow no corn at all; for which they cited the example of Holland, and other nations similarly circumstanced." Say's Political Economy (translated by Prinsep), book i, chap. xvii.

Mr. Mill has presented us, in his "Elements," with a most able discussion of this question. It is the summing up of a luminous mind. After noticing the argument against a free trade, given in the preceding extract, he proceeds to combat another frequently urged, *viz.* that if the merchants and manufacturers enjoy in certain cases the monopoly of the home supply, the farmers and landlords are subject to injustice, if a similar monopoly is

not bestowed upon them. The hollowness of this allegation he exposes in a manner that can scarcely fail to produce conviction; and he lays open several other fallacies on the subject of the corn trade with equal success. For further information the reader is referred to the following works:—

Smith's Wealth of Nations, book iv, chap. v.

Malthus's Essay on Population, book iii, chap. xi and xii.

Encyclopedia Britannica (Supp.), Article, Corn Laws.

An Essay on the Impolicy of a Bounty on the Exportation of Grain, and on the Principles, which ought to regulate the Commerce of Grain (pamphlet), by James Mill.

An Essay on the External Corn Trade, by R. Torrens (a work of considerable ability, and containing a pretty thorough discussion of the subject).

Ricardo's Principles of Political Economy and Taxation, chap. xxii (2d edition).

QUESTION VII.

IS IT POSSIBLE THAT MECHANICAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR SUPERSEDING MANUAL LABOUR CAN BE CARRIED TO EXCESS, AND BE THE CAUSE OF A PERMANENT WANT OF EMPLOYMENT?

The extensive use of machinery, which enables a few men to do the work of many, and the contemporaneous prevalence of severe distress arising from a want of employment, have naturally suggested the opinion, that the former is the cause of the latter. The question, however, is by no means of recent date. One of our earliest writers in the *modern* era of political economy, Sir James Steuart, devotes a chapter to it, in which, although he does not treat it in a very profound manner, he will prove, perhaps, to have arrived at a just con-

clusion. "It is hardly possible," he observes, "*suddenly* to introduce the smallest innovation into the political economy of a state, let it be ever so reasonable, nay ever so profitable, without incurring some inconveniences. A room cannot be swept without raising dust; one cannot walk abroad without dirtying one's shoes; neither can a machine, which abridges the labour of men, be introduced *all at once* into an extensive manufacture, without throwing many people into idleness." "These inconveniences are only temporary; the advantage is permanent; and the necessity of introducing every method of abridging labour and expense, in order to supply the wants of luxurious mankind, is absolutely indispensable, according to modern policy, according to experience, and according to reason." Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy, book i, chap. xix.

The question has been discussed with more minuteness and profundity, by later writers, particularly with reference to the actual situation of affairs since the return of peace.

Mr. Malthus, in a section of his Principles of Political Economy, entitled "Of Inventions to abridge Labour, considered as a Stimulus to the continued Increase of Wealth," has some remarks bearing upon it, but he by no means treats the subject with the hand of a master. There is in that section, as in the whole book, a sort of vacillation in his views, and a proneness to qualify and neutralize his conclusions, which cannot fail to strike every reader, and which render it difficult to state his opinions except in his own words. The sum of them on the present question seems to be, that the advantages derived from the substitution of machinery for manual labour, depend upon the extension of the market for the commodities produced, and the increased stimulus given to consumption. On this representation M. Say justly remarks, that it is a confined view of the subject. It overlooks one exceedingly important advantage, which would be felt, even where the consumption of the article produced was not susceptible of increase, namely, the virtual increase of income

on the part of the consumers of the article, or perhaps, more properly speaking, the augmentation of the *power* of their incomes. As they give less for the article in question, they have evidently more of their income left to bestow on other articles; and the encouragement of industry in other manufactures will be exactly commensurate to its discouragement in that where the machinery is introduced. For all the hands thrown out of employ by the machinery, there will be a demand in other quarters; and the only possible evil is the loss and inconvenience, which the workmen will sustain, in transferring their industry to an employment with which they are unacquainted. Thus mechanical improvements superseding manual labour, cannot be the cause of a *permanent* want of employment. For further illustration the reader may consult Say's Letters to Mr. Malthus, particularly the fourth; Say's Political Economy, book i, chap. vii; Malthus's Principles of Political Economy, chap. vii, sect. v; Sismondi's Nouveaux Principes d'Economie Politique.

The last named author takes a most decided part against machinery beyond a certain point. When production, says he, is fully equal to consumption, every discovery in the arts or in mechanics is a calamity, because it only adds to the enjoyments of the consumers the opportunity of obtaining them at a cheaper rate, while it deprives the producers of even life itself.

It is proper to add, that Mr. Ricardo, in the third edition of his work on Political Economy, contends (not perhaps very consistently with some other of his opinions), that the introduction of machinery occasions a permanent diminution in the demand for labour. For an answer to his arguments, see the Preface to Torrens's Essay on Production, p. xi, note.

QUESTION VIII.

IS IT TRUE, THAT THERE CANNOT BE A GENERAL GLUT OF COMMODITIES?

"It has been thought," says Malthus, "by some able writers, that although there may easily be a glut of particular commodities, there cannot possibly be a glut of commodities in general; because, according to their view of the subject, commodities being always exchanged for commodities, one half will furnish a market for the other half, and production being thus the sole source of demand, an excess in the supply of one article merely proves a deficiency in the supply of some other, and a general excess is impossible." The able writers alluded to, are

M. Say, in his Political Economy, book i, chap. xv.

Mr. Ricardo, in his Principles of Political Economy and Taxation.

Mr. Mill, in his Commerce Defended.

As the argument of these distinguished economists is curious, we present it at full length in the words of Mr. Mill.

"No proposition in political economy," says he, "seems to be more certain than this, which I am going to announce, how paradoxical soever it may at first sight appear; and if it be true, none undoubtedly can be deemed of more importance. The production of commodities creates, and is the one and universal cause which creates, a market for the commodities produced. Let us but consider what is meant by a market. Is any thing else understood by it than that something is ready to be exchanged for the commodity which we would dispose of? When goods are carried to market, what is wanted is somebody to buy. But to buy, one must have wherewithal to pay. It is obviously, therefore, the collective means of payment, which exist in the whole nation, that constitute the entire market of the

nation. But wherein consist the collective means of payment of the whole nation? Do they not consist in its annual produce, in the annual revenue of the general mass of its inhabitants? But if a nation's power of purchasing is exactly measured by its annual produce, as it undoubtedly is; the more you increase the annual produce, the more, by that very act, you extend the national market, the power of purchasing, and the actual purchases of the nation. Whatever be the additional quantity of goods, therefore, which is at any time created in any country, an additional power of purchasing, exactly equivalent, is at the same instant created; so that a nation can never be naturally overstocked either with capital or with commodities; as the very operation of capital makes a vent for its produce."— "When money is laid out of the question, is it not in reality the different commodities of the country, that is to say, the different articles of the annual produce, which are annually exchanged against one another? Whether these commodities are in great quantities or in small,

that is to say, whether the country is rich or poor, will not one half of them always balance the other? and is it not the barter of one half of them with the other, which actually constitutes the annual purchases and sales of the country? Is it not the one half of the goods of the country which universally forms the market for the other half, and *vice versa?* And is this a market that can ever be overstocked? Or can it produce the least disorder in this market, whether the goods are in great or in small quantity? All that here can ever be requisite is, that the goods should be adapted to one another; that is to say, that every man who has goods to dispose of should always find all those different sorts of goods with which he wishes to supply himself in return. What is the difference when the goods are in great quantity and when they are in small? Only this, that in the one case the people are liberally supplied with goods, in the other that they are scantily; in the one case that the country is rich, in the other that it is poor: but in the one case, as well as in the other, the

whole of the goods will be exchanged, the one half against the other; and the market will always be equal to the supply. Thus it appears, that the demand of a nation is always equal to the produce of a nation. This indeed must be so; for what is the demand of a nation? The demand of a nation is exactly its power of purchasing. But what is its power of purchasing? The extent undoubtedly of its annual produce. The extent of its demand, therefore, and the extent of its supply, are always exactly commensurate."—"It may be necessary, however, to remark, that a nation may easily have more than enough of any one commodity, though she can never have more than enough of commodities in general. The quantity of any one commodity may easily be carried beyond its due proportion; but by that very circumstance is implied, that some other commodity is not provided in sufficient proportion. What indeed is meant by a commodity's exceeding the market? Is it not, that there is a portion of it, for which there is nothing that can be had in exchange? But of

those other things, then, the proportion is too small. A part of the means of production, which had been applied to the preparation of this superabundant commodity, should have been applied to the preparation of those other commodities, till the balance between them had been established. Whenever this balance is properly preserved, there can be no superfluity of commodities, none for which a market will not be ready. This balance, too, the natural order of things has so powerful a tendency to produce, that it will always be very exactly preserved, where the injudicious tampering of government does not prevent, or those disorders in the intercourse of the world, produced by wars into which the unoffending part of mankind are plunged, by the folly much more frequently than by the wisdom of their rulers." Commerce Defended, p. 81, et seq., 2d edit.

This ingenious argument is examined by Mr. Malthus, in his Principles of Political Economy, at some length. See chap. vii, sect. iii. He does not appear, however, to be very successful or very clear in his attempt to

refute it. M. Sismondi has also opposed the doctrine, in his Nouveaux Principes d'Economie Politique, where he asserts, that "upon this principle it becomes absolutely impossible to comprehend or explain the most established fact in the history of commerce, the glut of the markets."

To combat the objections brought by these distinguished writers, M. Say has again entered the field. In his Letters to Mr. Malthus, he takes a pretty extensive survey of the whole question, and furnishes a variety of considerations, which will have great weight in its determination. The reader may also consult Mr. Ricardo's Principles of Political Economy and Taxation, chap. xxi, entitled, "Effects of Accumulation on Profits and Interest."

QUESTION IX.

IS IT BENEFICIAL OR INJURIOUS TO LIMIT BY LAW THE RATE OF INTEREST?

This subject has been most ably discussed by Jeremy Bentham, in a small work, entitled, Defence of Usury; showing the Impolicy of the present Legal Restraints on the terms of Pecuniary Bargains; in a Series of Letters to a Friend. This is one of his earliest productions, and free from those peculiarities of style, which have prevented the later works of this profound writer from being generally known. The fundamental position which he endeavours to establish is, "that no man of ripe years and of sound mind, acting freely, and with his eyes open, ought to be hindered, with a view to his advantage, from making such bargain, in the way of obtaining money, as he thinks fit; nor

(what is a necessary consequence) any body hindered from supplying him, upon any terms he thinks proper to accede to." Having laid down this position, the author proceeds to examine five arguments, which may be brought in favour of the restraints on money bargains: 1. Prevention of Usury. 2. Prevention of Prodigality. 3. Protection of Indigence against Extortion. 4. Repression of the Temerity of Projectors. 5. Protection of Simplicity against Imposition.

The futility of these allegations he sets in a clear light; and having thus shown, that there are no ways in which those laws do any good, he points out several in which they cannot but do mischief, *viz.* by precluding many from the needful pecuniary assistance altogether; by forcing men upon more disadvantageous ways of obtaining it; or upon more disadvantageous terms in the very way forbidden; by exposing a useful class of men to unmerited suffering and disgrace; and by encouraging and protecting treachery and ingratitude.

There is one consideration appertaining to

the present question, which, when duly weighed, will have more influence, perhaps, than any other in its final determination: it is, why, when all other kinds of bargains are left free, should *pecuniary* bargains be thus shackled? Why should a man be allowed to get as much profit as he can upon his goods, and as much rent as he can for his houses or his lands, and be prevented from getting as much interest as he can for the use of his money?

Our great economist, Adam Smith, expresses himself, in his Wealth of Nations, as being in favour of legislative interference with the rate of interest; but he is said to have acknowledged himself in error on this point, after a perusal of the arguments of Mr. Bentham. Sir James Steuart has a chapter, in the fourth book of his Political Economy, entitled, "Of the Regulation of Interest by Statute," in which he maintains the necessity of such a regulation, to restrain the frenzy of some borrowers, and to protect others from the oppression of their creditors. Ganilh and Say take the same side as Bentham. See the Inquiry into the various

Systems of Political Economy, book iii, chap. iii, by the former, and Political Economy, book ii, chap. viii, by the latter. It may be added, for the information of those who are not in possession of Mr. Bentham's little volume, that they will find an excellent abstract of its contents, and commentary upon it, in the Edinburgh Review.

The abolition of the Usury Laws has been lately submitted to Parliament (more than once we believe), by Mr. Serjeant Onslow; and there is little doubt, that, in process of time, when the subject becomes more thoroughly understood, he will succeed in his object.

QUESTION X.

IS PARSIMONY BENEFICIAL OR INJURIOUS TO NATIONAL WEALTH? AND DOES IT, OR DOES IT NOT, LESSEN CONSUMPTION?

It is a well known doctrine of Adam Smith's, that every prodigal is a public enemy, and every frugal man a public benefactor. "Parsimony," he says, "and not industry, is the immediate cause of the increase of capital. Industry, indeed, provides the subject which parsimony accumulates. But whatever industry might acquire, if parsimony did not save and store up, the capital would never be the greater." It is by parsimony, therefore, that public wealth must be increased.

This doctrine has been broadly and decidedly opposed; and it has been contended, that it is on expenditure, and not parsimony, that the

augmentation of national wealth depends; that saving diminishes demand, and thereby discourages industry; that the tendency to save is generally too great, and that large loans on the part of government are often necessary to counteract its pernicious effects, and to reconvert into revenue that capital, which the parsimonious habits of individuals have saved from their incomes. To this representation the followers of Adam Smith reply, that "what is annually saved is as regularly consumed as what is spent; and that the consumption, or demand, cannot be decreased by parsimony, although the consumers may be different from what they would be if nothing were saved."

In the words of M. Say, "it must on no account be overlooked, that, in one way or other, a saving, such as that we have been speaking of, whether expended productively or unproductively, still is in all cases expended and consumed; and this is a truth that must remove a notion extremely false, though very much in vogue, namely, that saving injures and limits consumption. No act of saving subtracts in the

least from consumption, provided the thing saved be reinvested, or restored to productive employment." Political Economy, book i, chap. xi.

In a note on the above passage, Mr. Prinsep, the translator of Say, remarks as follows: "On the subject of saving, Sismondi, and after him our own Malthus, have adopted a different opinion. According to them, the powers of production have already outrun the desire and the ability to consume; consequently, every thing that tends to reduce that desire is injurious, because it is already too inert for the interests of production. Wherefore, inasmuch as the desire of accumulation is the direct opposite to that of consumption, it must of necessity be injurious in the highest degree. On these principles it might be proved, without difficulty, that the prodigality of public authority, war, or the poor law of England, is a national benefit, for all of them stimulate consumption. Indeed, they leave their readers to draw this inevitable conclusion; for they maintain, in plain terms, that the enlargement of the productive powers of man, by the use of ma-

chinery or otherwise, makes the existence of unproductive consumers a matter, not of mere possibility or probability, but of actual necessity and expedience. Vide Sismondi, Nouv. Prin. liv. ii, c. iii, and liv. iv, c. iv; Malthus, Principles of Political Economy. These maxims would justify the prodigality of Louis XIV of France, and of the Pitt system of England. But fortunately they are erroneous: and, if the contrary principles, laid down by our author here, and infrà, chap. xv, needed further illustration or support, they have been rendered still more clear and convincing by his recent Lettres à M. Malthus."

The sentiments of Mr. Malthus on this subject are so well explained in the following passage of the Introduction to his Principles of Political Economy, that we cannot do better than present it to the reader.

"Adam Smith has stated, that capitals are increased by parsimony; that every frugal man is a public benefactor; and that the increase of wealth depends upon the balance of produce above consumption. That these pro-

positions are true to a great extent is perfectly unquestionable. No considerable and continued increase of wealth could possibly take place without that degree of frugality which occasions, annually, the conversion of some revenue into capital, and creates a balance of produce above consumption; but it is quite obvious, that they are not true to an indefinite extent; and that the principle of saving, pushed to excess, would destroy the motive to production. If every person were satisfied with the simplest food, the poorest clothing, and the meanest houses, it is certain, that no other sort of food, clothing, and lodging would be in existence; and as there would be no adequate motive to the proprietors of land to cultivate well, not only the wealth derived from conveniences and luxuries would be quite at an end, but, if the same divisions of land continued, the production of food would be prematurely checked, and population would come to a stand long before the soil had been well cultivated. If consumption exceed production, the capital of the country must be diminished,

and its wealth must be gradually destroyed, from its want of power to produce; if production be in great excess above consumption, the motive to accumulate and produce must cease, from the want of will to consume. The two extremes are obvious; and it follows, that there must be some intermediate point, though the resources of political economy may not be able to ascertain it, where, taking into consideration both the power to produce and the will to consume, the encouragement to the increase of wealth is the greatest." p. 8 and 9.

The reader will find some curious speculations, connected with the subject before us, in the Earl of Lauderdale's Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Public Wealth, particularly in chap. iv, entitled, "Of the Possibility of increasing Wealth by any other means than those by which it is produced." His Lordship is a determined opponent of Adam Smith's views with respect to parsimony, which, when pushed beyond a certain extent, he considers "must be fatal to the progress of public wealth."

Many excellent observations on the effects

of accumulation will be found in various parts of Say's Letters to Malthus, more particularly in the second letter, where the arguments of the latter writer are very fairly met and answered.

QUESTION XI.

IS THE FUNDING SYSTEM CONSISTENT WITH SOUND POLICY?

"It appears to have been the common practice of antiquity to make provision, during peace, for the necessities of war, and to hoard up treasures beforehand, as the instruments, either of conquest or defence, without trusting to extraordinary impositions, much less to borrowing in times of disorder and confusion."—"On the contrary, our modern expedient, which has become very general, is to mortgage the public revenues, and to trust that posterity will pay off the incumbrances contracted by their ancestors. And they, having before their eyes so good an example of their wise fathers, have the same prudent reliance on *their* posterity; who at last, from necessity more than choice,

are obliged to place the same confidence in a new posterity." These are the words of Hume, in his able Essay on Public Credit. Since his time, the system of borrowing has been carried to an extent, which he probably would have conceived as utterly impossible, and new light has been thrown on the various ways in which it operates on the interests of society. The consequences of public debts are of the highest importance, both in an economical and in a political view. Our question, therefore, might be separated into two: 1. As to the effects of the funding system on national wealth: 2. As to its effects on the relative situation of the government and the people; or, in other words, its effects on civil liberty; to which might be added, its effects on the foreign relations of a country. It was the latter, or the political consequences, which Hume regarded as far the most momentous. "Though the injury," says he, "that arises to commerce and industry from our public funds, will appear, upon balancing the whole, not inconsiderable, it is trivial, in comparison of the prejudice

that results to the state, considered as a body politic, which must support itself in the society of nations, and have various transactions with other states in wars and negociations. The ill there is pure and unmixed, without any favourable circumstance to atone for it; and it is an ill too of a nature the highest and most important." The whole essay of this sagacious writer will amply repay the attention of the inquirer on the present weighty question.

Burke seems to have coincided with Hume, as to the political consequences of the funding system. "Nations," says he, "are wading deeper and deeper into an ocean of boundless debt. Public debts, which at first were a security to governments, by interesting many in the public tranquillity, are likely in their excess to become the means of their subversion. If governments provide for these debts by heavy impositions, they perish by becoming odious to the people. If they do not provide for them, they will be undone by the efforts of the most dangerous of all parties; I mean an extensive discontented monied interest, injured

and not destroyed. The men, who compose this interest, look for their security, in the first instance, to the fidelity of government; in the second, to its power. If they find the old governments effete, worn out, and with their springs relaxed, so as not to be of sufficient vigour for their purposes, they may seek new ones, that shall be possessed of more energy." Reflections on the Revolution in France.

M. Say, in his excellent work on Political Economy, to which we have so often referred, bestows considerable pains on the subject before us. He enumerates and examines the following arguments, which have been adduced in favour or palliation of a national debt:—

1. It is a debt from right hand to left, no wise enfeebling the body politic.

2. The securities become real substantial values, and are so much positive wealth.

3. The annual circulation is increased by the whole amount of the annual disbursements of government.

4. A national debt binds the creditor to the government.

5. It is an index of public opinion, and thereby operates as a check on government.

6. It affords a prompt investment of capital.

He endeavours to show the futility of all these arguments, except the last, which he considers as presenting the sole benefit of a national debt. See book iii, chap. ix.

The question in an economical view evidently resolves itself in a great measure into the consideration of the effects of converting capital into revenue, which have already come under our notice, in the preceding question on the advantages or disadvantages of parsimony. Those, who contend that parsimony is the only method of enriching a country, must necessarily view the funding system as the road to beggary and ruin. "When the public expense is defrayed by funding," says Adam Smith, "it is defrayed by the annual destruction of some capital, which had before existed in the country; by the perversion of

some portion of the annual produce, which had before been destined for the maintenance of productive labour, towards that of unproductive labour."—"The practice of funding," he adds, "has gradually enfeebled every state, which has adopted it." See the excellent chapter on Public Debts, which concludes his immortal work on the Wealth of Nations.

On the other hand, the adversaries of parsimony very consistently maintain, that the funding system, by the conversion of superfluous capital into consumable revenue, gives a beneficial stimulus to agriculture and commerce, and increases national wealth; and, what is a necessary consequence, that all attempts to pay off a public debt by the conversion of sums destined for revenue into capital, must be injurious to public prosperity. On this ground, therefore, sinking funds are pernicious in proportion to their efficacy. This last position is enforced at great length by the Earl of Lauderdale, in the chapter of his work referred to under the preceding question.

Besides the works already cited, the reader

may consult Spence's pamphlet, Britain Independent of Commerce; and Mill's Commerce Defended; also Ganilh's Inquiry into the Various Systems of Political Economy, book iii, chap. iii and iv; Malthus's Principles of Political Economy, chap. vii, sect. ix.

QUESTION XII.

IS IT TRUE, THAT THE INTEREST OF THE LANDLORD IS ALWAYS OPPOSED TO THAT OF THE CONSUMER AND MANUFACTURER?

It is affirmed by Mr. Ricardo, that "the interest of the landlord is always opposed to that of the consumer and manufacturer. Corn," he proceeds to say, "can be permanently at an advanced price only because additional labour is necessary to produce it; because its cost of production is increased. The same cause invariably raises rent, it is therefore for the interest of the landlord, that the cost attending the production of corn should be increased. This, however, is not the interest of the consumer; to him it is desirable, that corn should be low, relatively to money and commodities;

for it is always with commodities or money that corn is purchased. Neither is it the interest of the manufacturer that corn should be at a high price, for the high price of corn will occasion high wages, but will not raise the price of his commodity. Not only, then, must more of his commodity, or, which comes to the same thing, the value of more of his commodity, be given in exchange for the corn which he himself consumes, but more must be given, or the value of more, for wages to his workmen, for which he will receive no remuneration. All classes, therefore, except the landlords, will be injured by the increase in the price of corn. The dealings between the landlord and the public are not like dealings in trade, whereby both the seller and buyer may equally be said to gain; but the loss is wholly on one side, and the gain wholly on the other; and if corn could by importation be procured cheaper, the loss in consequence of not importing is far greater on one side, than the gain is on the other." Principles of Political Economy and Taxation, chap. xxiv, p. 423, 2d edit.

This reasoning is combated by Mr. Malthus; but his objections to it are too long to be extracted here. We must content ourselves with referring to his Principles of Political Economy, chap. iii, sect. viii and ix.

Mr. Ricardo himself has in some degree qualified his conclusions on this subject, in his recent pamphlet, entitled, On Protection to Agriculture.

"If landlords," says he, "could be sure of the prices of corn remaining steadily high, which happily they cannot be, they would have an interest opposed to every other class in the community; for a high price, proceeding from difficulty of production, is the main cause of the rise of rent."—"This advantage to the landlords themselves would be more apparent than real; for, to complete the advantage, they should be able to calculate on steady as well as high prices. Nothing is so injurious to tenants as constantly fluctuating prices; and under a system of protection to the landlord, and prohibition against the importation of foreign corn, tenants must be exposed to the

most injurious fluctuations of profits. When the profits of a farmer are high, he is induced to live more profusely, and to make his arrangements as if his good fortune were always to continue; but a reverse is sure to come: he has then to suffer from his former improvidence, and he finds himself entangled in expenses, which render him utterly unable to fulfil his engagements with his landlord."—"The landlord's rent is, indeed, nominally high; but he is frequently in the situation of not being able to realize it; and little doubt can exist, that a more moderate and steady price of corn, with regular profits to the tenant, would afford to the landlord the best security for his happiness and comfort, if not for the receipt of the largest amount of rent." p. 44, et seq.

QUESTION XIII.

IS IT POSSIBLE, THAT A PAPER CURRENCY, NOT CONVERTIBLE INTO THE PRECIOUS METALS AT THE WILL OF THE HOLDER, CAN BE MAINTAINED IN ANY COUNTRY WITH ADVANTAGE?

No subject has been more frequently discussed, within the last dozen years, than the advantages and disadvantages of an inconvertible paper currency, such as that which has inundated England since the far-famed Bank Restriction Act. While some politicians have regarded a currency of this kind as an inexhaustible mine of wealth, and strenuously resisted a return to cash payments; others have pointed out its pernicious consequences, and contended, that there was no security against the mischievous fluctuations of the circulating

medium, but convertibility into specie, or at least into bullion. The latter doctrine has decidedly won the day, and there are now few, who maintain the expediency of an inconvertible paper-money, issued at the discretion of a set of private individuals; although there is still a considerable difference of opinion as to the mode of effecting a return to a sounder system.

Out of the discussions, to which this subject has given rise, there has lately grown an opinion, that however necessary a convertible paper may be, under existing circumstances, yet the value of paper money might be supported and secured, without any obligation to pay in the precious metals.

"The obligation," says Mr. Mill, "of paying the notes in the metal is a necessary security, where they are issued at pleasure by private bankers. If they were issued by a government, strictly responsible to the people, it would not be indispensable; for in that case the utility of keeping gold at the mint price, or, in other words, the currency of the same

value as if it was metallic, might be so distinctly understood, that it would not be the interest of those entrusted with the powers of government to allow it to vary." He then endeavours to show, that there are cases in which an advantage would be derived from a paper money, not convertible immediately into the metals. See his excellent Sections on Money, in chap. iii of Elements of Political Economy.

Mr. Ricardo holds a similar doctrine. "It is not necessary," says he, "that paper money should be payable in specie to secure its value; it is only necessary, that its quantity should be regulated according to the value of the metal, which is declared to be the standard. If the standard were gold of a given weight and fineness, paper might be increased with every fall in the value of gold, or, which is the same thing in its effects, with every rise in the price of goods."—"Experience, however, shows," he continues, "that neither a state nor a bank ever have had the unrestricted power of issuing paper money without abusing that power: in all states, therefore, the issue of

paper money ought to be under some check and control; and none seems so proper for that purpose, as that of subjecting the issuers of paper money to the obligation of paying their notes, either in gold coin or bullion." Principles of Political Economy and Taxation, chap. xxvii.

For farther information on the subject of a paper currency, the reader may consult Mr. Huskisson's able pamphlet, entitled, The Question concerning the Depreciation of our Currency stated and examined; also Mr. Ricardo's Proposals for an Economical and Secure Currency.

QUESTION XIV.

HAS AN INFLUX OF MONEY, OR AN INCREASE OF THE CIRCULATING MEDIUM, ANY TENDENCY TO STIMULATE PRODUCTION?

It is a doctrine of Mr. Hume, in his Essay on Money, that an influx of the precious metals gives great encouragement to industry, during the interval which elapses before the prices of commodities are adjusted to the increased quantity of specie. "We find," says he, "that, in every kingdom, into which money begins to flow in greater abundance than formerly, every thing takes a new face: labour and industry gain life; the merchant becomes more enterprising, the manufacturer more diligent and skilful, and even the farmer follows his plough with greater alacrity and attention."

"In my opinion," he continues, "it is only in this interval, or intermediate situation, between the acquisition of money and rise of prices, that the increased quantity of gold and silver is favourable to industry."

This doctrine, originally applied to an influx of the precious metals, has of late been adduced to prove the advantages of an increasing paper currency. And if a benefit of the kind alleged is admitted in the former case, it cannot be denied in the latter. The question, therefore, becomes of far higher importance, than it was when our currency was metallic.

In support of this new application of Hume's doctrine, an appeal has been made to recent experience. While the Bank of England, it is said, was increasing its issues of paper, every thing went on prosperously; agriculture flourished, and commerce was in full activity: but no sooner did that establishment begin to withdraw its notes, and contract its issues, than distress seized upon all the industrious classes, realizing the picture, which Hume has drawn, of a

nation whose money is decreasing in quantity. "There is always," says he, "an interval before matters be adjusted to their new situation; and this interval is as pernicious to industry, when gold and silver are diminishing, as it is advantageous, when these metals are increasing. The workman has not the same employment from the manufacturer and merchant, though he pays the same price for every thing in the market. The farmer cannot dispose of his corn and cattle, though he must pay the same rent to his landlord. The poverty, and beggary, and sloth, which must ensue, are easily foreseen." Such have been the effects, it is said, of that diminution of our paper currency, which has been the consequence of the attempt to return to cash payments.

Hume's doctrine has been closely examined by Mr. Mill. "Mr. Hume has supposed," says he, "that certain other effects are produced by the increase of the quantity of money. When an augmentation of money commences, individuals, more or fewer, go

into the market with greater sums. The consequence is, that they offer better prices. The increased price gives encouragement to the producers, who are incited to greater activity and industry; and an increase of production is the consequence.

"This doctrine implies a want of clear ideas respecting production. The agents of production are the commodities themselves, not the price of them. They are the food of the labourer, the tools and machinery with which he works, and the raw materials which he works upon. These are not increased by the increase of money: how then can there be more production? This is a demonstration, that the conclusion is erroneous at which Hume has arrived. It may be satisfactory also to unravel the fallacy of his argument.

"The man who goes first to market with the augmented quantity of money, either raises the price of the commodities which he purchases, or he does not raise it.

"If he does not raise it, he gives no additional encouragement to production. The

supposition, therefore, must be, that he does raise prices. But exactly in proportion as he raises prices, he sinks the value of money. He, therefore, gives no additional encouragement to production." The author then enters into details, for which the reader is referred to the work itself. See Elements of Political Economy, chap. iii, sect. xi.

QUESTION XV.

ARE LARGE FARMS HURTFUL OR BENEFICIAL?

THIS is a question, which has excited much controversy, as the various periodical publications of the last thirty years will abundantly testify. From the mass of writings on the subject, we select the following succinct and perspicuous discussion, by an author who has made some valuable contributions to the science of political economy. After showing the beneficial effects of contrivances for abridging agricultural labour, he proceeds to the consideration of the present question.

"With respect to the advantage or disadvantage of large farms, the question is somewhat more complicated, and may require a brief illustration. Let the estate of a nobleman

be divided into ten small farms, each cultivated by the labour of the farmer and his family; and let one of these farmers find, that, if he were to conduct a large concern, he could, in consequence of employing improved machinery, and of otherwise abridging and economising labour, perform the same quantity of work with a less number of hands, and therefore bring a larger proportional surplus produce to market, and afford to pay a higher proportional rent than while he continued on his small farm. On the expiration of leases, the nobleman, tempted by the offer of a higher rent, lets the whole estate to this single farmer, and, consequently, the other nine farmers, with their families, sink to the condition of agricultural labourers upon the estate. So far the effect is injurious. But, on the other hand, the employment of more efficacious machinery, and the more economical application of labour, which are found admissible into large concerns, and which enable the great farmer to tempt the proprietor with the offer of a higher rent, would also enable him, with a given expendi-

ture, to raise a greater produce than before. This, as we have already seen, would allow old fields to receive a higher dressing; and new fields, which lay before waste, to be brought into cultivation; would cause a larger quantity of surplus produce to be brought to market, and consequently furnish the means of employing a larger number of manufacturing labourers. Let the surplus produce of this estate have been formerly food and material for ten, and let it now be food and material for fifteen manufacturing families. The case will then stand thus: the evil of throwing the whole estate into one large farm will consist of the loss of comfort sustained by the nine families, who have sunk from the state of small farmers to that of day-labourers; while the benefits resulting from the change will consist of the additional comfort enjoyed by the family which obtain the large farm, the additional enjoyments of the proprietor, who receives a higher rent, and the whole enjoyments of the five additional manufacturing families, to which the increased surplus produce of the estate fur-

nishes the means of existence. It is impossible, therefore, to doubt, that throwing the estate into one large farm produced a great balance of good." An Essay on the Production of Wealth, by R. Torrens, p. 139, *et seq.*

For further information, see Ganilh's Various Systems of Political Economy, book ii, chap. iv.

QUESTION XVI.

ARE ENTAILS, AND THE LAW OF PRIMOGENITURE, OF ADVANTAGE OR DISADVANTAGE, IN THE PRESENT STATE OF SOCIETY IN ENGLAND?

THE origin of entails, and of the law of primogeniture, is very clearly traced by Adam Smith, in book iii, chap. ii, of his Wealth of Nations. He explains the circumstances which in former ages rendered these regulations necessary; and, in showing that those circumstances no longer exist, he condemns the institutions themselves in very unqualified terms.

"The right of primogeniture," he says, "still continues to be respected; and, as of all institutions it is the fittest to support the pride of family distinctions, it is still likely to endure for many centuries. In every other respect,

nothing can be more contrary to the real interests of a numerous family than a right, which, in order to enrich one, beggars all the rest of the children." With regard to entails he observes: "In the present state of Europe, when small as well as great estates derive their security from the laws of their country, nothing can be more completely absurd. They are founded upon the most absurd of all suppositions; the supposition, that every successive generation of men have not an equal right to the earth, and to all that it possesses; but that the property of the present generation should be restrained and regulated according to the fancy of those who died perhaps five hundred years ago."

The strongest argument in favour of entails in our country is, probably, that they are in some degree necessary to the maintenance of one of the three branches of our legislature in a proper state of respectability and independence. In this particular they may be found of service, while, in regard to their economical and private effects, they perhaps deserve the

unqualified condemnation passed upon them by the author of the Wealth of Nations, who, indeed, seems not to look upon them with much favour for their tendency to keep up the power of the aristocratic body.

"Entails," says he, "are still respected through the greater part of Europe, in those countries particularly in which noble birth is a necessary qualification for the enjoyment either of civil or military honours. Entails are thought necessary for maintaining this exclusive privilege of the nobility to the great offices and honours of their country; and that order having usurped one unjust advantage over the rest of their fellow-citizens, lest their poverty should render it ridiculous, it is thought reasonable that they should have another."

Mr. Malthus is, on this question, opposed to Dr. Smith. He thinks it at least doubtful, whether the nation would be richer if the right of primogeniture were abolished; and further, that the British constitution could not be maintained without an aristocracy, and an effective aristocracy could not be maintained without the

right of primogeniture. See his Principles of Political Economy, chap. vii, sect. vii.

Burke entertained similar views. The law of primogeniture, he remarks, has, without question, a tendency, and he thinks a most happy tendency, to preserve a character of consequence, weight, and prevalent influence over others in the whole body of the landed interest.

QUESTION XVII.

IS THE DEPENDENCE OF COLONIES AN ADVANTAGE TO THE MOTHER COUNTRY?

THIS question may be considered in a political and in a commercial view. The dependence of colonies may be useful in furnishing stations for fleets and armies, and in other respects may serve political purposes. The commercial advantages of such a dependence are more dubious. "When our North American colonies succeeded, in 1783, in finally obtaining their independence, there was a general belief that the brightest season of our commerce was past. No person ventured to think, that our colonial trade would be as profitable as before; and to have said, that it was about to become more profitable, would have been accounted a singular example of delusion. The

fact, however, was, that the colonies continued to make their purchases of manufactured goods from us in the same way as before, and that their new situation gave them additional means for the augmentation of these purchases." This is an extract from Brewster's Edinburgh Encyclopædia, article Colony. The writer proceeds to say, that if we apply "the practical lesson given us by the example of America, we shall soon see, that most governments have over-rated the advantage of retaining settlements in the tributary shape of colonies." "If farther arguments," he continues, "are wanted to produce the conviction, that our colonies would be more profitable to us in a free than in a restricted shape, we need merely refer our readers to the instructive tract written on this subject by Mr. Bentham, at the outset of the French Revolution. Nor will it be unprofitable to make a practical contrast between the annual burthen attendant on the defence and government of the West Indies, Canada, or Nova Scotia, and our complete exemption from ex pense in the case of the United States from

whom our mercantile gains are so much greater."

The reader will find a good deal of light thrown on this subject by M. Say, in his Political Economy, book i, chap. xix. He instances the French colonies to prove, that such establishments are disadvantageous to the mother country. "When Poivre," he says, "was appointed governor of the Isle of France, the colony had not been planted more than fifty years, yet he calculated it to have then cost France no less than sixty millions of francs; to be a source of regular and large outgoing; and to bring her no return of any kind whatsoever. It is true, that the money spent on the defence of that settlement had the further object of upholding our other possessions in the East Indies; but, when we find that these latter were still more expensive, both to the government and to the proprietors of the two companies, old and new, it is impossible to deny, that all we gained by keeping the Mauritius at this enormous expense was the opportunity of a further waste in Bengal and on the

coast of Coromandel. The same observations will apply to such of our possessions, in other parts of the world, as were of no importance, but in a military point of view. Should it be pretended, that these stations are kept up at a great sacrifice, not with the object of gain, but to extend and affirm the power of the mother country, it might yet be asked, why maintain them at such a loss, since this power has no other object but the preservation of the colonies, which turn out to be themselves a losing concern?"

A very elaborate treatise on the subject of colonies will be found in Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations, book iv, chap. vii. He clearly shows, that colonies, as dependent possessions, have hitherto proved sources of loss to the mother countries; and that the advantages flowing from them are such as they would have yielded, in an equal or superior degree, if they had been free states. Mr. Ricardo, who agrees with him in his general views on the subject, expresses, however, a doubt, whether a mother country may not sometimes be benefited by the

restraints to which she subjects her colonial possessions, and consequently derive advantage from the dependence of colonies. See his chap. xxv, on Colonial Trade. Colonel Torrens, in his Essay on the Production of Wealth, chap. vi, maintains the same opinion more explicitly, and discusses at some length the questions, "Might not the trade, which is carried on between a mother country and her colonies, be equally extensive and beneficial, though the connection between them were dissolved, and the colonies acknowledged as independent states?"—and, "Can any accession of wealth be derived from those restrictions, which, in modern times, parent states have almost uniformly imposed upon the commerce of their colonies?"

In maintaining the opinion, that such restrictions may increase the wealth of the mother country, this author does not, perhaps, allow sufficient weight to the consideration, that commerce with a rich country is more valuable than with a poor one, and that, in proportion as colonies are impoverished for the

advantage of the parent state, they become a worse market for her productions. In a given condition of the colony, a restricted trade might be more advantageous to the country on which it depended than a free one; but would not such a shackled commerce, by preventing or retarding the improvement of the colony, absolutely and in the long run occasion less wealth to be derived from it? Would it not be an instance of the short-sighted policy, which, for a small immediate gain, sacrifices a much more important, though remoter good?

We cannot close this subject without noticing an excellent discussion of it in Mill's Elements, chap. iii, sect. xvii. The reader may also consult Ganilh's Inquiry into the Systems of Political Economy, book iv, chap. vii.

QUESTION XVIII.

IS THE LABOUR OF SLAVES MORE OR LESS EXPENSIVE THAN THAT OF FREEMEN?

THERE is this amongst many other differences between the civilized countries of modern times and the states of Greece and Rome, that, in the former, menial services are performed and manufactures carried on by freemen, while in the latter they chiefly fell to the lot of slaves. It is a curious inquiry, what effect these two contrary systems have had on national wealth. If slaves formed a more expensive instrument of production, national wealth would of course be impeded. Adam Smith, in book iv, chap. ix, of his Wealth of Nations, has some remarks on this subject, and draws the conclusion, that in the manufactures carried on by slaves more labour must

generally have been employed to execute the same quantity of work, than in those carried on by freemen, because the latter usually invent and employ machinery, which slaves do not. In another part of his book, where he seems to have in his eye our colonial slaves, he comes to the same conclusion, but on different grounds; *viz.* because the wear and tear of a slave costs his master more than the wear and tear of a free servant, which is equally at the expense of the employer. Book i, chap. viii.

In another place, the same author, contrasting the labour of the feudal villains with that of freemen, says, "the experience of all ages and nations, I believe, demonstrates, that the work done by slaves, though it appears to cost only their maintenance, is in the end the dearest of any. A person, who can acquire no property, can have no other interest but to eat as much, and to labour as little as possible. Whatever work he does beyond what is sufficient to purchase his own maintenance, can be squeezed out of him by violence only, and not by any

interest of his own. In ancient Italy, how much the cultivation of corn degenerated, how unprofitable it became to the master, when it fell under the management of slaves, is remarked by both Pliny and Columella." Book iii, chap. ii.

M. Say dissents from the opinions here cited. "Stewart, Turgot, and Smith," says he, "all agree in thinking, that the labour of the slave is dearer and less productive than that of the freeman. Their arguments amount to this: a man, that neither works nor consumes on his own account, works as little and consumes as much as he can: he has no interest in the exertion of that degree of care and intelligence, which alone can ensure success: his life is shortened by excessive labour, and his master must replace it at a great expense: besides, the free workman looks after his own support; but that of the slave must be attended to by the master; and, as it is impossible for the master to do it so economically as the free workman, the labour of the slave must cost him dearer." To controvert these arguments

M. Say enters into a calculation, showing, that the annual expense of a Negro slave in the West Indies is five hundred francs, while the wages of a free labourer would be at least eighteen hundred francs. "Common sense," he proceeds to say, "will tell us, that the consumption of a slave must be less than that of a free workman. The master cares not if his slave enjoy life, provided he do but live; a pair of trowsers and a jacket are the whole wardrobe of the Negro, his lodging a bare hut, and his food the manioc root, to which kind masters now and then add a little dried fish. A population of free workmen, taken one with another, has women, children, and invalids to support: the ties of consanguinity, friendship, love, and gratitude, all contribute to multiply consumption; whereas the slave owner is often relieved by the effects of fatigue from the maintenance of the veteran: the tender age and sex enjoy little exemption from labour; and even the soft impulse of sexual attraction is subject to the avaricious calculations of the master."

M. Ganilh has examined the opinions of M. Say on this question, and urged a variety of considerations in support of the doctrine of Smith and Turgot. See his Inquiry into the Systems of Political Economy, book ii, chap. v.

Perhaps the manner, in which we have stated the question before us, leads to too narrow a survey of the productive powers of the freeman and the slave. When we raise our view from a comparison of their individual labour, to the eventual consequences of the two kinds of industry, as exhibited in the lapse of ages, we are struck with the superior effects on national prosperity, which free industry everywhere displays. How, indeed, can it be otherwise, when in the one case thousands of intellects, stimulated by interest and ambition, are constantly at work to devise new and more effectual methods of production: while, in the other, the task of invention is left to a few minds, perhaps weakened and blinded by power?

QUESTION XIX.

IS THE LAW, WHICH PROHIBITS THE PAYMENT OF WAGES IN ANY SHAPE BUT THAT OF MONEY, CALCULATED TO BE OF ANY SERVICE TO THE LABOURER OR MECHANIC?

In many of our manufacturing districts it has been the custom of some of the manufacturers, to pay the wages of their workmen partly in money and partly in articles of food and clothing. The oppression to which this system has sometimes given rise, or of which it has been the instrument, induced the legislature to interfere for the protection of the workman, and to pass the law in question. As this enactment is a palpable deviation from the grand principle of political economy, that bargains should be left free, since no one can be more vigilant in guarding the interests of the parties

concerned than they themselves, it is well worth inquiring, whether there is any just ground for such a deviation. The objections to the law may be stated as follows:—Either it will be generally observed, or it will not: if it *be* generally observed, it will frequently prevent the workman from procuring employment, since manufacturers may be able to pay wages in goods, when they are totally incapable of furnishing money: if it be *not* generally observed, which is the more probable case, it will be the means of giving an advantage to those who are dishonest and loose in principle, over the strictly upright and conscientious manufacturers, without any benefit to the workman. Nor will the law, in any case, better the condition of the workman, whose remuneration will always depend on the demand which there may happen to be for labour as compared with the supply. If the demand for labour is great, he will be able to make a good bargain with his employer: if the demand is dull, he had better receive his wages in goods than remain without employment; and whether

he receive them in goods or money, the real amount will be much the same, depending as it does on the relative state of the demand and the supply of labour.

The opinion of Adam Smith is in favour of such a law as that we are now considering.

"Whenever," he says, "the legislature attempts to regulate the differences between masters and their workmen, its counsellors are always the masters. When the regulation, therefore, is in favour of the workmen, it is always just and equitable; but it is sometimes otherwise, when in favour of the masters. Thus the law, which obliges the masters in several different trades to pay their workmen in money, and not in goods, is quite just and equitable. It imposes no real hardship upon the masters. It only obliges them to pay that value in money, which they pretended to pay, but did not always really pay, in goods." Wealth of Nations, book i, chap. ix, part ii.

QUESTION XX.

WHAT DETERMINES THE QUANTITY IN WHICH COMMODITIES EXCHANGE FOR ONE ANOTHER, OR, IN OTHER WORDS, THEIR RELATIVE VALUE?

On this subject there are two doctrines: one is, that the relative value of commodities depends upon the state of the demand and supply; the other, that it depends on the cost of production.

Mr. Malthus is the great champion of the former doctrine, and he has urged various arguments in support of it in his Principles of Political Economy, chap. ii, sect. ii and iii. Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Mill are on the opposite side. See Wealth of Nations, book i, chap. vii; Principles of Political Economy

and Taxation, chap. iv and xxx; and Elements of Political Economy, chap. iii, sect. ii.

Perhaps, after all that has been said on the subject, it is merely a question as to the most accurate mode of stating the fact. In this light it is, indeed, regarded by Mr. Mill; and his explanation is so clear and concise, that it will be generally considered as a satisfactory solution of the problem.

In the first instance, he says, the relative value is determined by the principle of demand and supply. "If a great quantity of corn comes to market to be exchanged for cloth, and only a small quantity of cloth to be exchanged for corn, a great quantity of corn will be given for a small quantity of cloth."— "This answer, however, does not resolve the whole of the question. If the quantity in which commodities exchange for one another depends upon the proportion of supply to demand, it is evidently necessary to ascertain upon what that proportion depends." The answer is, upon the cost of production. "It thus appears," he continues, "that the relative

value of commodities, or, in other words, the quantity of one which exchanges for a given quantity of another, depends upon demand and supply in the first instance; but upon cost of production ultimately; and hence, in accurate language, upon cost of production entirely."

The inquirer on this subject must bear in mind, that the question applies to "such commodities only," to borrow the words of Mr. Ricardo, "as can be increased in quantity by the exertion of human industry, and on the production of which competition operates without restraint." Monopolized commodities are acknowleged, on all hands, to depend as to price upon the principle of supply and demand. Mr. Malthus has certainly overlooked this distinction (although it is one with which he must be perfectly familiar) when he adduces paper-money as an instance, in which mere limitation of supply confers value in a very high degree on what costs comparatively nothing. This will be readily granted; but he forgets that paper-money is a monopolized commodity, or

one on the production of which competition does *not* operate without restraint, and it has therefore nothing to do with the question. If gold, as he supposes, were no longer produced, and the cost of its production to cease, it would also become one of the same class of commodities, and be excluded from the present controversy.

QUESTION XXI.

ARE IMPROVEMENTS IN INLAND NAVIGATION TO BE CLASSED AMONGST THOSE OBJECTS, WHICH ARE BEST LEFT TO THE EFFORTS OF PRIVATE INTEREST, OR OUGHT THEY TO BE UNDERTAKEN AT THE PUBLIC EXPENSE?

THIS question is one on which great diversity of opinion is frequently expressed. There is a short discussion of it in Colonel Torrens's Essay on the Production of Wealth. After remarking, that, "with respect to the application of capital, and the direction of industry, the first duty of government is not to interfere;" he proceeds to say, that although "from the nature and extent of the benefits, which a country derives from the facility of internal intercourse, it might seem, at first sight, not unreasonable to conclude, that the legislature has the power of rendering labour

and capital more productive, by causing improvements in inland navigation to be undertaken at the public expense," yet there are considerations, which "prove, that in all ordinary cases this conclusion would be erroneous." He then endeavours to show, by an analytical illustration, that if canals could be profitably opened anywhere, it would be not only superfluous and absurd, but positively pernicious for government to undertake them: for, in this case, private interest would accomplish the object far more economically. If they could *not* be opened with a profit, it would be pernicious to force capital into an unproductive channel. "In either case," he continues, "nothing but mischief can result from the interference of government. With respect to the internal trade of a country, the whole art of governing is comprised in giving security to property, and in opening an uninterrupted field to individual exertion," p. 224, et seq.

Adam Smith expresses similar views. See Wealth of Nations, book v, chap. i, part iii.

QUESTION XXII.

WHAT REGULATIONS OUGHT TO BE ADOPTED IN A FREE STATE WITH REGARD TO THE PRESERVATION OF GAME?

On this subject, the following extract from Blackstone may afford the reader some useful information:—

"Another violent alteration of the English constitution consisted in the depopulation of whole countries for the purposes of the king's royal diversion, and subjecting both them, and all the ancient forests of the kingdom, to the unreasonable severity of forest laws, imported from the continent, whereby the slaughter of a beast was made almost as penal as the death of a man. In the Saxon times, though no man was allowed to kill or chase the king's deer, yet he might start any game, pursue, and

kill it upon his own estate. But the rigour of these new constitutions vested the sole property of all the game in England in the king alone; and no man was allowed to disturb any fowl of the air, or any beast of the field, of such kinds as were specially reserved for the royal amusement of the sovereign, without express licence from the king, by the grant of a chase, or free warren, and whose franchises were granted, as much with a view to preserve the breed of animals, as to indulge the subject. From a similar principle to which, though the forest laws are now mitigated, and by degrees grown entirely obsolete, yet from this root has grown a bastard slip, known by the name of the Game Law, now arrived to, and wantoning in, its highest vigour; both founded upon the same unreasonable notions of permanent property in wild creatures, and both productive of the same tyranny to the commons; but with this difference, that the Forest Laws established only one mighty hunter throughout the land; the Game Laws have raised a little Nimrod in

every manor. And in one respect the ancient law was much less unreasonable than the modern; for the king's grantee of a chase, or free warren, might kill game in every part of his franchise; but now, though a freeholder of less than one hundred a year is forbidden to kill a partridge on his own estate, yet nobody else (not even the lord of the manor, unless he hath a grant of free warren) can do it without committing a trespass, and subjecting himself to an action."

"I believe it will be allowed," says Dr. Knox, "by all who have made remarks, that the individuals of this nation are more seriously and inveterately divided by disputes about the game, than by controversies, which make much more noise in the world, on the subjects of politics or religion. What remains among us of savageness and brutality is chiefly preserved by the mean and selfish greediness of those, who possess a thousand peculiar advantages, and who yet meanly contend for an exclusive right to destroy the game, that usufructuary

property which the Creator intended to be possessed by the first occupant, like the air, light, and water." Essays Moral and Literary.

The fairest principle, with regard to game, seems to be that adopted by our Saxon ancestors, namely, to allow every man to kill all that he finds on his own land. This right cannot surely be taken from him without the grossest injustice. But it may be contended, that on such a plan game of all kinds would soon be exterminated. What then? *Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum.* Let it perish, it may be replied, rather than wrong should be committed to promote the diversion, or gratify the palates of a numerically unimportant minority.

QUESTION XXIII.

ARE SUMPTUARY LAWS CONSISTENT WITH A COMPREHENSIVE AND ENLIGHTENED POLICY?

THERE is not much difference of opinion, we believe, amongst modern politicians, with regard to the present question: yet, as sumptuary laws have been frequently resorted to by various states in various ages, it is not uninstructive to inquire into their effects. The advocates of a lavish expenditure, who think that there is in man such a tendency to *save* as requires to be counteracted by profusion on the part of government, will of course ridicule the idea of restraints on the expenses of private individuals; but are not the abettors of parsimony bound in consistency to maintain the utility of laws, of which the object is to diminish unproductive consumption, and to promote the conversion of revenue into capital?

Some kind of answer to this question may possibly be gathered from the following extracts:—

"It is the highest impertinence and presumption," says Adam Smith, the decided advocate of parsimony, "in kings and ministers, to pretend to watch over the economy of private people, and to restrain their expense, either by sumptuary laws, or by prohibiting the importation of foreign luxuries. They are themselves always, and without any exception, the greatest spendthrifts in the society. Let them look well after their own expense, and they may safely trust private people with theirs. If their own extravagance does not ruin the state, that of their subjects never will." Wealth of Nations, book ii, chap. iii.

"Sumptuary laws," says M. Say, "are superfluous and unjust. The indulgence proscribed is either within the means of the individual or not: in the former case it is an act of oppression to prohibit a gratification involving no injury to others, equally unjustifiable as prohibition in any other particular; in the latter it is at all events nugatory to do so; for

there is no occasion for legal interference where pecuniary circumstances alone are an effectual bar. Every irregularity of this kind works its own punishment. It has been said, that it is the duty of the government to check those habits, which have a tendency to lead people into expenses exceeding their means; but it will be found, that such habits can only be introduced by the example and encouragement of the public authorities themselves. In all other circumstances, neither custom nor fashion will ever lead the different classes of society into any expenses but what are suitable to their respective means." Political Economy, book iii, chap. v.

"Sumptuary laws," says Mill, "have been adopted in several countries. In this way the legislature has operated directly to increase the amount of savings. It would not, however, be easy to contrive sumptuary laws, the effect of which would be very considerable, without a minute and vexatious interference with the ordinary business of life." Elements of Political Economy, p. 45.

QUESTION XXIV.

ARE THERE ANY CONSIDERATIONS, WHICH CAN JUSTIFY THE SYSTEM OF MANNING THE NAVY BY IMPRESSMENT?

GRANVILLE SHARP tells us, that he once called on Dr. Johnson, and "had a long debate with him about the legality of pressing seamen. He (the doctor) said, it was a condition necessarily attending that way of life; and, when they entered into it, they must take it with all its circumstances; and knowing this, it must be considered as voluntary service, like an innkeeper, who knows himself liable to have soldiers quartered upon him." Memoirs of Granville Sharp, by Prince Hoare.

The circumstance here alleged by Dr. Johnson is evidently no justification (nor was it, perhaps, designed as such) of this method of

recruiting the navy. That a man is aware of the hardships attending any profession, which he may embrace, cannot extenuate their impolicy and injustice, if those qualities really attach to them. This question, like every other in morals and politics, must be determined by the principle of utility. But, in the application of this principle, we must recollect, that the utility of preserving inviolate the rules of justice and equity is of the highest order, and can never be sacrificed with advantage, except in certain extraordinary emergencies, which it is possible indeed to conceive, but which rarely occur in actual life, either to individuals or nations. That a naval force may be maintained, without the injustice and violence of impressment, is proved by the example of the United States of America. Not a seaman treads the deck of one of their national vessels against his own consent. Every sailor enters the service by his own free will, and on conditions previously agreed upon. It is, as it ought to be, a bargain; an engagement, in which he consults his own pleasure or advantage.

QUESTION XXV.

IS THE GENERAL EDUCATION OF THE POOR CONSISTENT WITH SOUND POLICY?

THE policy, propriety, and even necessity of furnishing the poor with the means of acquiring knowledge, are now pretty generally owned; but there occasionally starts up an opponent of this doctrine, not only amongst that large class of people, who are at once wealthy and ignorant, but even amongst the well educated and enlightened. Nor can it be denied, that there are some considerations, which, at least on a first view of the subject, appear to justify such opposition. The late Mr. Windham, it is well known, was averse to the diffusion of knowledge amongst the poor, and the same sentiments have been more recently maintained, both in the senate and in

the pulpit. Such an opinion would be a death-blow to those high hopes of the improvement of the species, which the benevolent philosopher delights to cherish, and which so many circumstances in the present day unite to confirm. If mankind are still to proceed in the career of improvement, all classes must share in the progress. It seems impossible, that civilization should advance much farther, with the incumbrance of an ignorant, and therefore degraded multitude. It is the natural course of things, that all should partake of the blessings of increasing knowledge. Besides, the greatest perfection of civilization, if not participated by the poor, that is by the majority, would be of little value. Of what great importance is it, that a few, perhaps one in a thousand, should be liberalized and enlightened? There is surely a species of selfishness in the very notion.

It is well remarked by Adam Smith, that, in the progress of the division of labour in civilized countries, man is apt to become stupified and debased, by spending his life in performing a few simple operations, which afford no exercise to the faculties of the understanding. "His dexterity at his own particular trade seems to be acquired at the expense of his intellectual, social, and martial virtues." It is observed by another author*, in treating of the same subject, that "to have never done any thing, but make the eighteenth part of a pin, is a sorry account for a human being to give of his existence." The only way in which man can be rescued from a state of degradation thus almost necessarily induced by the progress of society, is to illuminate his mind with knowledge. This, in fact, seems to be the provision, which nature has made to counteract the evils resulting from the advancement of the arts and refinements of life; an advancement, which would be a sacrifice of the mental excellence and happiness of the many to those of the few, were the poor to be debarred from the advantages of education.

A very common and trite objection to the

* M. Say, in his Political Economy.

education of the poor is thus noticed by Robert Hall: "Some have objected," says this eloquent preacher, "to the instruction of the lower classes, from an apprehension that it would lift them above their sphere, make them dissatisfied with their station in life, and, by impairing the habit of subordination, endanger the tranquillity of the state; an objection devoid surely of all force and validity. It is not easy to conceive in what manner instructing men in their duties can prompt them to neglect those duties, or how that enlargement of reason, which enables them to comprehend the true grounds of authority and the obligation to obedience, should indispose them to obey. The admirable mechanism of society, together with that subordination of ranks which is essential to its subsistence, is surely not an elaborate imposture, which the exercise of reason will detect and expose. The objection we have stated implies a reflection on the social order, equally impolitic, invidious, and unjust. Nothing in reality renders legitimate government so insecure as extreme

ignorance in the people. It is this, which yields them an easy prey to seduction, makes them the victims of prejudice and false alarms, and so ferocious withal, that their interference in a time of public commotion is more to be dreaded than the eruption of a volcano." The Advantages of Knowledge to the Lower Classes, a Sermon by R. Hall.

The same sentiments will be found in the Wealth of Nations, in the section entitled, "Of the Expense of the Institutions for the Education of Youth."

QUESTION XXVI.

OUGHT THE EDUCATION OF THE POOR TO BE LEFT TO THE EXERTIONS OF PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS, OR TO BE PROVIDED FOR BY THE STATE?

"It is now a maxim of politics, which philosophy has extracted from experience, that wherever private interests are competent to the provision and application of their own instruments and means, such provision and application ought to be left to themselves. It was the opinion of Adam Smith, that all institutions, for the education of those classes of the people who are able to pay for it, should be taken altogether out of the hands of public bodies, and left to the natural operation of that free competition, which the interest of the parties desiring to teach and to be taught would

naturally create; and it is easy to see, that the same reasoning is applicable, in a great degree, even to the education of the poorest classes. But when it unfortunately happens, that the mass of a people are exceedingly ignorant, and at the same time too poor to pay for instruction, it is obvious that something must be done to give the work a beginning." Edinburgh Review, vol. xxi, p. 211.

Although Adam Smith, as stated in the preceding extract, was for leaving the education of the rich to themselves, he was decidedly of opinion, that the state might interfere with propriety and advantage in that of the poor. Since he wrote, a sort of middle plan has been adopted in England with regard to the latter; their education has been neither provided for by the state, nor left to the natural operation of the desire to teach and the desire to be taught; but it has been actively and extensively promoted by the pecuniary contributions, as well as personal efforts, of the high and middle classes. The question is therefore altered. It is now not so much whether the poor should

be abandoned in this matter to their own desires and exertions, as whether it would be better to leave their education to the voluntary associations of individuals, or to take it under the patronage and superintendence of the state. There is one evil, however, which naturally more or less attends every interference, whether of government or individuals, with the education of the people. Although it is impossible, that a community should ever be too enlightened, yet it is very possible, that particular members of it should contract habits and modes of thinking too refined for their condition in society, and therefore inimical to their own happiness. While the education of the poor is left to their own exertions, there is a natural and constant check on this superfluous refinement, as men in general will not bestow more expense on the instruction of their children than is necessary to fit them for their destination, and place them on a level with others of the same rank. The matter in this way regulates itself. But when the education of their children is taken out of the

hands of the poor, and is no longer dependent on their own exertions, the natural barrier to inappropriate cultivation of mind is removed, and a child may be accustomed to such refined habits and elevated notions, as will create the misery of its future life. That elementary instruction, therefore, which is offered gratuitously to the poorer classes, ought to be confined to the simplest rudiments of knowledge, to those acquirements, for which there is a use and demand in the lowest situations in life; and when the pupils are in possession of these they should be dismissed from the schools, the purpose being accomplished for which they were admitted. Thus furnished with the rudiments of learning, their future education should be left to the determination of their individual circumstances, to the pecuniary means of their friends, to the aspirations of their own minds, or the opportunities, which may open to them in the progress of life. While they would in this way be saved from the misery of undue culture, they would not be excluded from intellectual improvement, nor shut from

the road of honourable distinction. Far from every enlightened mind must be the wish of circumscribing the attainments or opportunities of any class. We would put instruments into the hands of the lowest, by which, if endowed with the requisite faculties and perseverance, they might raise themselves to any eminence; but we would not lift them by extraneous assistance to an elevation, from which, as soon as left to themselves, they must inevitably fall.

QUESTION XXVII.

WHAT TRUTH IS THERE IN THE DOCTRINE, WHICH RESOLVES THE RECIPROCAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE GOVERNORS OF A STATE AND THE PEOPLE, INTO A CONTRACT BETWEEN THEM?

THE doctrine of a contract of this kind has been urged in several shapes. Hobbes, in his Leviathan, founds political society on a pretended contract between the people and the sovereign, by which the former renounces its natural liberty, as pernicious to itself, and yields its whole power into the hands of the latter. His will comes thus to represent the wills of all his subjects; and, as whatever he does is in this sense done by general consent, he can never commit any wrong towards his people.

Locke has made a different use of the same doctrine of a contract, affirming, that the prince enters into an engagement to govern according to the laws for the common good; and that the people, on their part, enter into an engagement to obey him so long as he remains faithful to the conditions on which he received the crown.

Rousseau has indignantly rejected the idea of this bargain between prince and people; but he has supposed a social contract, by which every individual engages himself to every other individual, and which is the sole legitimate basis of all government.

"These three systems, so directly opposed to each other," says Bentham, from whom we have taken this short account of them, "have this in common, that they commence the theory of politics by a fiction, the three contracts being equally fictitious, and existing only in the imagination of their authors." Traités de Legislation.

For a complete exposure of the fallacy of the doctrine in question, the reader is referred

to Hume's able Essay on the Original Contract, in his Essays and Treatises, part ii, essay xii. He may also consult Locke on Government, Rousseau's Social Contract, Soame Jenyns's Disquisition on Government and Civil Liberty, and Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy, book vi, chap. iii.

QUESTION XXVIII.

IS THE UNANIMITY, EXACTED FROM JURIES IN OUR ENGLISH COURTS, CONDUCIVE TO THE EQUITY OF THEIR VERDICTS?

It is certainly a curious circumstance, that, while in almost all other cases a majority is considered as sufficient to decide any question brought before a body of men, the unanimous concurrence of the whole should be required in juries; that, while the preponderance of a unit is frequently allowed to determine the most important measures of state, the consent of all the deliberators is necessary, before the meanest individual can be convicted of crime.

The chief advantages, supposed to accrue from this regulation, are, that it compels a more thorough investigation and discussion of those cases in which there is room for differ-

ence of opinion, and that it leans to the side of mercy. Were the verdict to be determined by a majority, there would be no longer any necessity for discussion; the jurors might come to a decision at once, without that deliberation and controversy which are extorted from them on the present system; and, if the minority were large, there would be a dubiousness as to the propriety of the verdict, and a dissatisfaction with the sentence consequent upon it.

On the other hand it may be said, that the unanimity required can, in disputed cases, be only an apparent agreement; that difference of opinion will exist, though it may be suppressed from selfish or prudential considerations; that obstinacy in a conflict of this kind will often prevail over truth and equity; that one ill-intentioned, perverse individual is enabled to thwart the ends of justice, and shelter crime from punishment; and that the fair and manly method is, to take the opinion of a majority, by which the true state of the minds of the jurors will at all times be seen.

QUESTION XXIX.

IS SUCH AN ESTABLISHMENT AS BOTANY BAY CONSISTENT WITH SOUND POLICY?

THIS question, considered in its most comprehensive sense, involves not only the propriety of the punishment of transportation, but the wisdom of establishing a community in any part of the world, composed chiefly of offenders against the laws of their country. As to the first point, there have been various opinions. Bentham, in his work on legislation, affirms, that transportation to Botany Bay possesses none of the characteristics which a punishment ought to have, while it unites every fault. See tome ii, p. 184.

"Transportation," says Paley, "which is the sentence second in the order of severity, appears to me to answer the purpose of ex-

ample very imperfectly, not only because exile is in reality a slight punishment to those who have neither property, nor friends, nor reputation, nor regular means of subsistence at home; and because their situation becomes little worse by their crime than it was before they committed it; but because the punishment, whatever it be, is unobserved and unknown. A transported convict may suffer under his sentence, but his sufferings are removed from the view of his countrymen; his misery is unseen; his condition strikes no terror into the minds of those for whose warning and admonition it was intended." Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, book vi, chap. ix.

Amongst other objections to transportation as a punishment, may be mentioned the great expense of it to the community. It is, we believe, the most costly punishment that has been hitherto devised; and although this would be a comparatively insignificant consideration, if the extraordinary expense promoted the peace of society, or the reformation of the criminal,

yet it becomes of importance when neither of these effects is seen to follow.

On the wisdom of establishing a community of criminals we have never seen any remarks, but it is a part of the subject well worth attention. If all generations depend in a certain measure for their vices and virtues on their predecessors; if their character owes any thing to the moral atmosphere, which surrounds their infancy; if the associations, which they form with regard to their origin and their ancestors, have any influence on their sentiments and conduct; if there is any thing which ennobles the mind in looking back on the greatness and glory of which men feel themselves partakers by descent;—then to raise a nation from a stock of criminals is surely to provide for its degradation.

QUESTION XXX.

IS THE PRACTICE OF ADMINISTERING OATHS IN JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS AND CIVIL BUSINESS, PRODUCTIVE OF ADVANTAGES SUFFICIENT TO COMPENSATE THE EVILS ATTENDING UPON IT?

OATHS have been employed in modern times with a prodigality, which could not fail to weaken their force. In many instances, indeed, they are looked upon as mere forms, and men perjure themselves without the least compunction. Even in judicial proceedings, it may be questioned whether they make any deep impression on the mind. At least there are good reasons for not estimating their efficacy in this respect very highly. Hence the inquiry naturally suggests itself, whether they are really of any use; that is, whether the

advantages preponderate over the evils attending them. If he who takes an oath does not feel the obligation, it is a worse than useless ceremony, inasmuch as it is likely to be instrumental in giving a false weight to evidence destitute of value. It may lead men of upright and conscientious principles, and unable to conceive the possibility of a total disregard to so solemn a pledge, to put an erroneous estimate upon the testimony adduced.

Mr. Bentham has some observations on this subject in his work on legislation, so often referred to. See tome ii, p. 328. He makes one striking remark; namely, that when men impose an oath they attempt to usurp an authority over God himself, since they ordain a punishment, which is left to the Supreme Judge to execute.

The same writer has more recently published a separate work on the subject, entitled, Swear not at all; showing the Needlessness and Mischievousness as well as Antichristianity of all Oaths; and in particular the Abuse made of them in the English Universities.

Dr. Paley condemns the employment of oaths on slight and frivolous occasions. He remarks, that the obscure and elliptical form of the oath in our own country, "together with the levity and frequency with which it is administered, has brought about a general inadvertency to the obligation of oaths; which," he continues, "both in a religious and political view, is much to be lamented: and it merits public consideration, whether the requiring of oaths on so many frivolous occasions, especially in the Customs, and in the qualification for petty offices, has any other effect than to make them cheap in the minds of the people. A pound of tea cannot travel regularly from the ship to the consumer without costing half a dozen oaths at the least; and the same security for the due discharge of their office, namely, that of an oath, is required from a churchwarden and an archbishop, from a petty constable and the chief justice of England. Let the law continue its own sanctions, if they be thought requisite; but let it spare the solemnity of an oath. And where it is necessary,

from the want of something better to depend upon, to accept men's own word, or own account, let it annex to prevarication penalties proportioned to the public consequence of the offence." Moral and Political Philosophy, book iii, chap. xvi.

In the same chapter the Doctor enters into a discussion on the lawfulness of oaths according to Scripture, in which he attempts to obviate the objections of the Quakers and Moravians.

Dr. Priestley, in his Lectures on History and General Policy, expresses it as his opinion, that it would be "much better for civil governments to content themselves with enforcing the obligation of truth by such penalties as are used on other occasions, and to punish all false affirmations before a magistrate as they do perjury." See lecture lvi.

QUESTION XXXI.

WHAT IS THE PROPER END OR OBJECT OF PUNISHMENT?

To this question several answers may be given. The proper end of punishment is said by some to be the satisfaction of justice; by others the prevention of crimes; by others the reformation of the offender. The first doctrine is that which most immediately occurs to a mind beginning to reflect on the subject, and it is often warmly defended, although it is now pretty nearly abandoned by systematic writers on legislation. One of the last instances of a laboured defence of it, which we have met with, is to be found in a dissertation by Lord Woodhouslee, appended to his Life of Lord Kames. The second opinion is supported by the generality of writers, although they by no

means reject the third object, as a subordinate consideration. Of late years, a few philanthropists have argued, that the principal object of punishment should be the reformation of the offender, and that other ends are of inferior consequence. In this number is Mr. Roscoe, who has recently published a work on Penal Jurisprudence, in which he advocates that doctrine. Perhaps it is erroneous to fix upon any one of these ends exclusive of the rest: at least they are all compatible in a majority of cases, and therefore the question of most importance is, which should be given up when they interfere with each other, or, in other words, which object is of the greatest moment? In this inquiry there will probably be little hesitation. If crimes could be more effectually prevented by any one punishment than another, the tendency of that punishment to satisfy the demand for justice, or to reform the offender, would be a secondary consideration. If the crime of murder, for example, could be more effectually prevented by the penalty of death, than by a term of imprisonment, which would

give an opportunity for the reformation of the criminal, that penalty ought to be inflicted, and the reformation of the offender abandoned, otherwise we should be showing more regard for the life of a murderer than for the lives of innocent persons.

For the opinions of various authors on this subject, the reader is referred to Mr. Montagu's work, mentioned under the succeeding question.

Since writing the above, we have met with a work of merit on the Philosophy of Criminal Jurisprudence, by Mr. Bicheno, in which he contends, that the main end of punishment is neither the satisfaction of justice, the reformation of the offender, nor the prevention of crimes, but simply the defence and protection of ourselves and others.

This, however, may be argued to be exactly the same object which is designated by the phrase, prevention of crimes. There are evidently two sources of injury against which we may be protected by the punishment of an offender: 1. We may be protected from the of-

fender himself, who may be incapacitated by banishment, imprisonment, or death, from injuring us again, or deterred from a repetition of the crime by the summary infliction of pain, or reformed, by moral discipline, from the disposition to commit it. 2. We may be protected against similar injuries from any other persons, who might be disposed to harm us in the same manner, were it not for the fear of that punishment which they see follow the perpetration of the crime. It is evident, then, that we are protected so far and no farther than crime is prevented, either in the offender himself, or in others: in a word, that the phrases "defence and protection," and "prevention of crimes," are identical in signification.

If we might venture to point out the source of what we regard as a misconception on the part of this highly respectable writer, we should say, that it arose from supposing the prevention of crimes to consist solely in deterring by the example of punishment, whereas that is only one way of effecting the object, and perhaps not greatly superior in importance to the other,

namely, the incapacitation of the offender to repeat his crime, or the production of an impression on his mind to prevent or deter him from it. In this view the two sources of crime, which we endeavour to stop, are evidently the same as the two sources of evil from which we defend or protect ourselves. If this representation is correct, the controversy resolves itself into a mere critical question as to the superiority of two equivalent modes of expression.

In closing these few remarks, it is only candid to state, that several writers, who have maintained the prevention of crimes to be the legitimate object of punishment, have spoken as if they limited their views to the efficacy of the example.

QUESTION XXXII.

ARE THERE ANY CASES IN WHICH SOCIETY IS JUSTIFIED IN INFLICTING THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH?

THE frequency of capital punishments, in our own country, is almost a threadbare topic; but it is not the less a grievance because it has been vehemently discussed, and because there may have been a good deal of vague and idle declamation against it. On such a subject as this, so much depends on the peculiar feelings of individuals in the judgments which they form, that no sort of unanimity can be expected, unless we set out from acknowledged principles, and steadily pursue them to their legitimate consequences.

In determining whether death ought to be inflicted as the punishment of any crime, we

ought, in the first place, to consider what is the proper object of all punishments; and secondly, how far the infliction of death effects that object better than punishments of other kinds. If we admit, that the proper, or principal object of punishment is the prevention of crimes; then we have to consider how far the execution of the criminal promotes this end, and whether it would not be accomplished in an equal degree by a penalty, which left him the opportunity of repentance and reformation.

If it appear, that, from the horror with which it is universally contemplated, death must be a more efficacious punishment in the way of prevention than any other, then comes the difficulty of deciding to what crimes it should be adjudged; and in doing this we must take into calculation the sympathies of the community; for if we adjudge the penalty of death to actions, which the general feeling pronounces not to deserve it, we may rest assured, that the law will not be adequately enforced. The punishment being thus rendered uncertain by its undue severity, there

will be a weaker motive to abstain from the crime, than if it had been less severe and had followed the commission of the act with greater certainty. Beccaria condemns the punishment of death altogether. He denies that society has any right to inflict it; he shows, that there is only one solitary case, and that of extremely rare occurrence, in which the death of a citizen can be necessary; that other punishments are more efficacious; that capital executions are pernicious by affording examples of barbarity; and he adduces a variety of other considerations on the same side. His reasoning as to the right of society to take away the life of an individual will probably be thought unsound, since it proceeds on a hypothetical or theoretical definition of laws and rights, which is in many respects controvertible. If the death of an individual will prevent a greater evil than itself, society has doubtless, it may be contended, a right to inflict it. It may be remarked by the way, that the word rights has, perhaps, done more to perplex questions of a

political nature than any other, which could be named; and were it altogether discarded, or only sparingly introduced, there would be a better chance of attaining truth and unanimity.

We are spared the trouble of referring to a variety of works on the present subject by the collection, which has been published, of the sentiments of the most eminent writers, by Mr. Basil Montagu, under the title of The Opinions of different Authors upon the Punishment of Death. The reader will there find extracts from Montesquieu, Beccaria, Blackstone, Paley, Bentham, and others.

QUESTION XXXIII.

IS IT ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE COMMUNITY, THAT A POWER OF PARDONING CONVICTED CRIMINALS SHOULD BE VESTED IN THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE, AND EXTENSIVELY EXERCISED?

"THE severity of punishment," says Bentham, "must vary inversely as the certainty of its being inflicted. What can be said of a power to render punishment uncertain? Such is, however, the immediate consequence of the power of pardoning. In society, as with individuals, the age of passion precedes the age of reason. The first penal laws were dictated by anger and revenge. But when these barbarous laws, founded upon caprice and antipathies, begin to shock an enlightened public, the power to pardon, offering a protection

against the rigour of sanguinary laws, becomes a comparative good; and is adopted without any examination of the evils entailed by this pretended remedy."—"When laws are too severe, the power of pardoning is a corrective; but this corrective is a new evil. Enact good laws, and break the magic wand by which they are paralized. If the punishment is necessary, it ought not to be remitted; if it is not necessary, it ought not to be pronounced." Traités de Legislation, tome ii, p. 192.

No one, perhaps, would contend, that the power of pardoning should not be possessed in any case whatever. To provide against unforeseen contingencies it seems absolutely indispensable, that the magistrate should have an authority to suspend at least the execution of a judicial sentence. The chief question is as to the degree or measure in which such a power ought to be possessed and exercised; and on this question there has been a great deal of ingenious controversy.

The well-known mode of administering justice in England is to condemn great numbers

to death, but to execute very few: that is, to exercise the power of pardoning or of commuting punishments in the case of the majority of criminals convicted of capital offences. Dr. Paley regards this practice as the result of enlightened humanity, and profound policy on the part of the English legislature. "The law of England," says he, "by the number of statutes creating capital offences, sweeps into the net every crime, which under any possible circumstances may merit the punishment of death: but when the execution of this sentence comes to be deliberated upon, a small proportion of each class are singled out, the general character, or the particular aggravation, of whose crimes render them fit examples of public justice. By this expedient few actually suffer death, whilst the dread and danger of it hang over the crimes of many. The tenderness of the law cannot be taken advantage of. The life of the subject is spared, as far as the necessity of restraint and intimidation permits; yet no one will adventure upon the commission of any enormous crime from a knowledge that

the laws have not provided for its punishment. The wisdom and humanity of this design furnish a just excuse for the multiplicity of capital offences, which the laws of England are accused of creating beyond those of other countries. The charge of cruelty is answered by observing, that these laws were never meant to be carried into indiscriminate execution; that the legislature, when it establishes its last and highest sanctions, trusts to the benignity of the crown to relax their severity, as often as circumstances appear to palliate the offence, or even as often as those circumstances of aggravation are wanting, which rendered this rigorous interposition necessary. Upon this plan it is enough to vindicate the lenity of the laws, that some instances are to be found in each class of capital crimes, which require the restraint of capital punishment: and that this restraint could not be applied without subjecting the whole class to the same condemnation." See Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy.

This reasoning has been pretty fully examined by Sir Samuel Romilly, in his Observations on the Criminal Law of England. He

justly remarks, that "whether the practice, which now prevails, be right or wrong, whether beneficial or injurious to the community, it is certain, that it is the effect, not of design, but of that change, which has slowly taken place in the manners and character of the nation, which are now so repugnant to the spirit of these laws, that it has become impossible to carry them into execution." He adds, "that there probably never was a law made in this country, which the legislature that passed it did not intend should be strictly enforced." His reasonings in opposition to Dr. Paley are too long to be quoted here, but they will amply repay the reader for the trouble of referring to the work itself.

Perhaps the most important part of the present subject might be stated in the following terms, in preference to those, which we have employed at the head of this article:—"Is it better to enact a severe punishment indiscriminately against crimes of various degrees, and inflict it only on a few of the more flagrant cases; or to proportion punishments to offences, and let them follow with invariable certainty?"

QUESTION XXXIV.

OUGHT THE BRUTE CREATION TO BE PROTECTED BY LAW FROM WANTON CRUELTY?

In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,
Or by necessity constrain'd, they live
Dependent upon man; those in his fields,
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof.
They prove too often at how dear a rate
He sells protection. Witness at his foot
The spaniel dying for some venial fault,
Under dissection of the knotted scourge;
Witness the patient ox, with stripes and yells
Driv'n to the slaughter, goaded as he runs
To madness; while the savage at his heels
Laughs at the frantic suff'rer's fury, spent
Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.
He too is witness, noblest of the train
That wait on man, the flight-performing horse;
With unsuspecting readiness he takes
His murd'rer on his back, and, push'd all day
With bleeding sides and flanks, that heave for life,

To the far distant goal, arrives and dies.
So little mercy shows, who needs so much!
Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,
Denounce no doom on the delinquent? None.

Cowper's Task.

It is well known, that Lord Erskine several years ago brought a bill into the House of Lords to prevent cruelty to the lower animals; and delivered an able speech (which was afterwards published) in support of the measure. This noble attempt to protect the defenceless, did not, however, meet with that success, which in the opinion of a number of the virtuous and enlightened it deserved. Its failure could be justified only on the ground, that the actions of man to the brute creation are not proper subjects for the interference of the legislature; that is, that to regulate them by law would, on the whole, produce more evil than good to the community.

A distinguished writer on the subject of legislation, to which he is understood to have devoted a considerable portion of his life, and whose sentiments we have repeatedly cited, is

of a different opinion, as will be seen by the following extract:—

"Legislation might have been extended farther than it has, in relation to the interests of the lower animals. In this respect, however, I by no means approve of the law of the Gentoos. There are good reasons for using animals for the sustenance of man, and for destroying those by which we are incommoded: it is a benefit to us, and to them it is no increase of evil; since they have not, like ourselves, any long and cruel anticipations of the future; and the death, which they receive at our hands, may always be rendered less painful than that which awaits them in the regular course of nature. But what can be alleged in justification of those useless torments which are inflicted upon them, those capricious cruelties of which they are the victims? Of all the reasons, that I could adduce for erecting these gratuitous cruelties into crimes punishable by law, I will confine myself to that which has relation to my subject: it would be instrumental in cultivating the general feeling

of benevolence, and softening the dispositions of men: or at least it would prevent that brutal depravity, which, after having sported with the sufferings of animals, requires as it increases to be gratified by human misery?" Traités de Legislation Civile et Penale, ouvrage extrait des manuscrits de M. Jérémee Bentham, par Et. Dumont, tome i, p. 101, 102.

The following passages are from the eloquent pleading of Lord Erskine:—

"For every animal, which comes in contact with man, and whose powers, and qualities, and instincts, are obviously constructed for his use, nature has taken the same care to provide, and as carefully and bountifully as for man himself, organs and feelings for its own enjoyment and happiness. Almost every sense bestowed upon man is equally bestowed upon them: seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking, the sense of pain and pleasure, the passions of love and anger, sensibility to kindness, and pangs from unkindness and neglect, are inseparable characteristics of *their* natures as much as of *our own.* Add to this, that the

justest and tenderest consideration of this benevolent system of nature is not only consistent with the fullest dominion of man over the lower world, but establishes and improves it. In this, as in every thing else, the whole moral system is inculcated by the pursuit of our own happiness. In this, as in all other things, our duties and our interests are inseparable."

"In what I am proposing to your Lordships, disinterested virtue, as in all other cases, will have its own certain reward. The humanity you shall extend to the lower creation, will come abundantly round in its consequences to the whole human race. The moral sense, which this law will awaken and inculcate, cannot but have a most powerful effect upon our feelings and sympathies for one another. The violences and outrages committed by the lower orders of the people, are offences more owing to want of thought and reflection than to any malignant principle, and whatever, therefore, sets them a thinking upon the duties of humanity, more especially where they have no rivalries nor resentments, and where there is a

peculiar generosity in forbearance and compassion, has an evident tendency to soften their natures, and to moderate their passions in their dealings with one another. The effect of laws, which promulgate a sound moral principle, is incalculable; I have traced it in a thousand instances, and it is impossible to describe its value."

Since the above was written an act of parliament introduced by Mr. Martin has partly remedied the defect of the English law in this matter, by making wanton cruelty liable to its proper punishment; but as the subject will probably again come under the review of the legislature, and is at all events full of interest, and not free from difficulties, we have suffered the present article to stand as originally penned.

QUESTION XXXV.

OUGHT THERE TO BE ANY RESTRICTIONS ON THE PUBLICATION OF OPINIONS?

There is a short but excellent discussion of this subject in An Apology for the Freedom of the Press, by Robert Hall, in which he endeavours to show, that a people ought to enjoy the "liberty of discussing every subject which can fall within the compass of the human mind."

"To comprehend," says he, "the reason on which the right of public discussion is founded, it is requisite to remark the difference between *sentiment* and *conduct*. The *behaviour* of men in society will be influenced by motives drawn from the prospect of good and evil: here then is the proper department of government, as it is capable of applying that good and evil by which actions are determined. Truth, on the

contrary, is quite of a different nature, being supported only by *evidence*; and as when this is represented we cannot withhold our assent, so where this is wanting no power or authority can command it.

"However some may affect to dread controversy, it can never be of ultimate disadvantage to the interests of truth, or the happiness of mankind. When it is indulged in its full extent, a multitude of ridiculous opinions will, no doubt, be obtruded upon the public; but any ill influence they may produce cannot continue long, as they are sure to be opposed with at least equal ability, and that superior advantage which is ever attendant on truth."

He then proceeds to remark, that publications often contain both good and evil, and that there is no way of separating the precious from the vile but by tolerating the whole. After taking an historical survey of the experience of mankind on this subject, he enters upon the defence of free inquiry in relation to government, and contends, by a variety of arguments, that a man has a right to discuss even the *form*

of government with the same freedom as any other topic.

The question before us has been expressly discussed in a recent work, entitled, Essays on the Formation and Publication of Opinions, and on other Subjects*. The sentiments therein maintained coincide in a great measure with those above cited. The following are the principal steps by which the author arrives at the conclusion, that the publication of opinions should be perfectly unrestrained. He argues,

That truth is beneficial and error injurious to the happiness of man: truth, therefore, is the object to which all regulations should be directed.

That there is no positive standard or test of truth, by the application of which the character of any opinions can be determined to the satisfaction of all mankind; and that the only way to try their soundness is to leave them to the most unrestrained discussion.

That truth will prevail over error, if they are

* By the Author of the present volume.

permitted freely to contend with each other, a fact proved by the general advancement of science.

That restrictions to be justified must proceed on the assumptions, first, that truth is pernicious; or, secondly, admitting it to be salutary, that the doctrines in favour of which they are enforced are infallibly true, and also that being true they must be supported in their contest with error: but, in the first place, truth has already been proved to be beneficial; secondly, it has been shown, that as there is no positive test of truth we ought never to assume, that it has been infallibly attained; thirdly, if the doctrines are true, restrictions are unnecessary, since error cannot prevail against them; and if they are not true, all restrictions in their favour would tend to perpetuate a source of misery.

A variety of other arguments and illustrations are adduced, for which we must take the liberty of referring the reader to the work itself.

QUESTION XXXVI.

ARE WE TO REGARD THE LAW OF OSTRACISM, AMONGST THE ATHENIANS, AS POLITIC OR IMPOLITIC, CONSIDERED IN REFERENCE TO THE PECULIAR NATURE OF THEIR GOVERNMENT?

"This was a law" (to borrow the words of Dr. Gillies), "by which the majority of the Athenian assembly might expel any citizen, however inoffensive or meritorious had been his past conduct, who by his present power and greatness seemed capable of disturbing the equality of republican government. This singular institution, which had been established soon after the Athenians had delivered themselves from the tyranny of Hippias, the son of Pisistratus, was evidently intended to prevent any person in future from attaining the same

unlawful authority. At Athens, even virtue was proscribed, when it seemed to endanger the public freedom; and only four years after the battle of Marathon, in which he had displayed equal valour and wisdom, Aristides, the justest and most respectable of the Greeks, became the victim of popular jealousy; an example of cruel rigour, which will ever brand the spirit of democratical policy." History of Ancient Greece, by John Gillies, LL. D., vol. i, p. 411.

This last expression of Dr. Gillies's is rather vague; but it must be allowed, that a law, of which the effect was to banish so much worth and wisdom without any specific charge, ought to have had very important advantages to justify it. Whether it had or had not must be determined by an examination of the peculiar constitution of the Athenian commonwealth. Montesquieu, with whom this law seems to have been a favourite, has furnished us with the following defence of it:—

"Ostracism," says he, "ought to be examined by the rules of politics, and not by

those of the civil law; and so far is this custom from rendering a popular government odious, that it is, on the contrary, extremely well adapted to prove its lenity. We should be sensible of this ourselves, if, while banishment is always considered amongst us as a penalty, we were able to separate the idea of ostracism from that of punishment. Aristotle tells us, it is universally allowed, that this practice has something in it both humane and popular. If, in those times and places where this sentence was executed, they found nothing in it that appeared odious; is it for us, who see things at such a distance, to think otherwise than the accuser, the judges, and the accused themselves? And if we consider, that this judgment of the people loaded the person with glory on whom it was passed; that when at Athens it fell on a man without merit, from that very moment they ceased to use it, we shall find, that numbers of people have entertained a false idea of it; for it was an admirable law, that could prevent the ill consequences, which the glory of a citizen

might produce, by loading him with new glory." Spirit of Laws, book xxvi, chap. xvii.

The same writer in another place observes, that "the law of ostracism was established at Athens, at Argos, and at Syracuse. At Syracuse it was productive of a thousand mischiefs, because it was imprudently enacted. The principal citizens banished one another by holding the leaf of a fig-tree in their hands; so that those, who had any kind of merit, withdrew from public affairs. At Athens, where the legislator was sensible of the proper extent and limits of his law, ostracism proved an admirable regulation: they never condemned more than one person at a time; and such a number of suffrages were requisite for passing this sentence, that it was extremely difficult for them to banish a person whose absence was not necessary to the state. The power of banishing was exercised only every fifth year: and indeed, as the ostracism was designed against none but great personages, who threatened the state with

danger, it ought not to have been the transaction of every day." Book xxix, chap. vii.

The reader will find a judicious discussion of the present question in a work of merit recently published, under the title of Essays on the Institutions, Government, and Manners of the States of Ancient Greece, by Henry David Hill, D.D. See Essay xii. He may likewise consult Potter's Archæologica Græca, book i.

PART II.

QUESTIONS

RELATING TO

THE NATURAL AND CIVIL HISTORY

OF

MANKIND,

AND TO

THE PROGRESS OF SOCIETY.

QUESTION XXXVII.

TO WHAT CAUSES ARE WE TO ASCRIBE THE PHYSICAL VARIETIES OF THE HUMAN RACE?

On this subject several different hypotheses have been maintained: one, that all the varieties in form and colour may be accounted for from the effects of climate; another, that there have been, from the beginning, different species of the human race distinguished by different colours; and a third, that there is a power in the human race of producing varieties unlike either of the parents, which varieties have the power of propagating themselves, and that in this way all the diversities of feature and complexion have arisen.

"The full and methodical discussion of this

curious and important subject," says a writer in Brewster's Edinburgh Encyclopedia, "requires that we should call in the aid of physiology, as well as of the geographical history of man; and that we should, in the first place, endeavour to ascertain the seat of colour in the human body; secondly, that we should examine the different hypotheses which have been thrown out, to account for the *immediate* cause of colour; the varieties of human complexion ought next to be collected and classed; and, finally, the influence of climate in producing these varieties must be investigated and ascertained." Article Complexion.

The first hypothesis we have mentioned can boast of numerous and able supporters, amongst whom are Buffon, Blumenbach, Zimmerman, Winterbottom, Mitchell, and Smith. The reader may consult

Buffon's Natural History, by Smellie, vol. iii, pp. 57—207.

Winterbottom's Account of Sierra Leone, vol. i, p. 188, &c.

Smith's Essay on the Causes of the Variety

of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species.

Blumenbach's De Generis Humani Varietate Nativâ.

The following extract, from the article already quoted, presents a good summary of the objections to this hypothesis:—

"As the dark-complexioned varieties of mankind are found near the poles; as people of the same complexion are found over the whole continent of America, under all its various climates; as there are numerous instances of comparative fairness of complexion under the heat of a burning climate; as radical differences of complexion are found in the same regions, and even among the same people; and as there are numerous instances where the original complexion has remained permanent, notwithstanding it has been exposed to a change of climate for centuries, it may fairly be inferred, that the characteristic complexions of the different varieties of the human race are not the result of climate."

Those, who have denied the power of cli-

mate to produce the effects to be accounted for, amongst whom we may mention Bayle, Lord Kames in his Sketches of Man, Mr. White, and Dr. Pritchard, have generally fallen into the second hypothesis, but the last-named author has started a theory of his own, which is curious, if not satisfactory. He considers, "that the principle in the animal economy, on which the production of varieties in the race depends, is entirely distinct from that which regards the changes produced by external causes on the individual. In the former instance, external powers acting on the parents influence them to produce an offspring possessing some peculiarities of form, colour, or organization; and it seems to be the law of nature, that whatever characters thus originate become hereditary, and are transmitted to the race, perhaps in perpetuity. On the contrary, the changes produced by external causes, in the appearance or constitution of the individual, are temporary, and in general acquired characters are transient, and have no influence on the progeny." He further thinks, that civi-

lization is the great cause in the production of these varieties; that the original stock of mankind were Negroes; and that "the process of nature in the human species is the transmutation of the characters of the Negro into those of the European, or the evolution of white varieties in black races of men." See Researches into the Physical History of Man, where the reader will find a great deal of information collected on the whole subject.

QUESTION XXXVIII.

ARE THE NEGROES, AS A RACE, NATURALLY INFERIOR TO THE WHITES IN THEIR INTELLECTUAL POWERS?

"I am apt to suspect," says Hume, "the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual eminent in either action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them; no arts; no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient Germans, the present Tartars, have still something eminent about them in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original

distinction between these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are Negro slaves dispersed all over Europe, of whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; though low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In Jamaica, indeed, they talk of one Negro as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly." Essays and Treatises, vol. i, note M, p. 521.

Since Hume wrote this rather sweeping and hasty decision, there has been a supply of fresh *data* for determining the question. We are now much better acquainted with the internal condition of Africa, and the arts, acquirements, laws, and institutions of its black population. In the United States of America, many of the descendants of Negro slaves have become free, and received the rudiments of education, knowing no other language than the English, and having been imbued from their birth with the moral and religious ideas and

feelings of civilized life. In that country, it is true, although they are admitted to the privileges of citizenship, and have the opportunity of exerting their talents in various ways, they still appear among the whites in the character of a degraded *caste,* and are not allowed by the general feeling to mix in society with the descendants of Europeans. In St. Domingo, however, we have an instance of all their moral and intellectual faculties being left to their free developement, with the opportunity of appropriating the skill, knowledge, and genius of the most civilized countries of Europe. A few years will probably decide the question of their inferiority. In the mean time, the inquirer on this interesting subject cannot do better than consult the works of the recent travellers in Africa, the accounts which may be found in various works on America of the state of the Negro population there, and the narratives of the transactions in St. Domingo since it has become the seat of an independent power.

Physiologists have suggested another method of determining the present question, namely,

by a comparison of the cerebral organization of the European and the Negro. It is found, that the intellectual capacities of animals, in general, correspond pretty closely to the relative degree in which the brain is developed. Man, the chief in point of intellect, excels all the inferior tribes in the size of his cranium, compared with that of his face: as we recede from him, and descend to the lower ranks of animals, we find the cavity of the skull diminished in size, till its anterior expanded portion, or forehead, is lost altogether. Hence the depression of the cranium becomes a general indication of inferior mental powers; and as this appearance is strikingly predominant in the Negro conformation, while on the other hand the forehead of the European is high and broad, and presents a greater developement than that of any of the dark varieties of mankind, it is argued, that the Negroes are a race naturally subordinate in their intellectual faculties; that they carry this truth inscribed in legible characters on their very fronts.

The characters of the Negro head are thus

described by naturalists:—Narrow and depressed forehead; the entire cranium contracted anteriorly; the cavity less, both in its circumference and transverse measurements; great developement of the face; prominence of the jaws altogether; chin receding, &c. &c.

"In all these particulars," it is remarked by a writer on the subject, "the Negro structure approximates unequivocally to that of the monkey."—"If the bones of the face in the Negro were taken as a basis, and a cranium were added to them of the same relative magnitude which it possesses in the European, a receptacle for the brain would be required much larger than in the latter case. However, we find it considerably smaller. Thus the intellectual part is lessened; the animal organs are enlarged; proportions are produced just opposite to those, which are found in the Grecian ideal model." Lawrence on Physiology.

Of the fact, that the general structure of the Negro head is such as is here described, there can be no doubt, verified as it is by the con-

current testimony of the most eminent naturalists. But whether such a structure is accompanied by inferior intellectual powers, must be determined after all by an appeal to the facts, which the history of the different races of men supplies. Even the presumption in favour of that opinion, furnished by a survey of the cerebral formation and faculties of the lower animals, strong as it is, would be of little weight, unless corroborated by proofs of the nature alluded to.

That naturalists should be decided supporters of the superiority of the white race is not surprising. Their language will sometimes excite a smile in readers not accustomed to the intimate union of moral and physiological terms. Cuvier, in endeavouring to show that the ancient Egyptians were not of the Negro race, which some suppose them to have been, affirms, from an examination of many of their embalmed bodies, that they belonged to the same race with ourselves; that their cranium and brain were equally voluminous: in a word,

that they formed no exception" (as from their high state of civilization they would have done, had they been of the Negro race) "to that cruel law, which seems to have doomed to eternal inferiority all the tribes of our species, which are unfortunate enough to have a depressed and compressed cranium."

Another physiologist remarks, that "the monstrous faith of millions made for one has never been doubted or questioned in all the extensive regions occupied by human races, with the anterior and superior parts of the cranium flattened and compressed."

"The retreating forehead, and the depressed vertex," says the same writer, "of the dark varieties of man, make me strongly doubt whether they are capable of fathoming the depths of science; of understanding and appreciating the doctrines and the mysteries of our religion."—"To expect, that the Americans or Africans can be raised by any culture to an equal height in moral sentiments and intellectual energy with Europeans, appears to

me quite as unreasonable as it would be to hope, that the bull-dog may equal the greyhound in speed; that the latter may be taught to hunt by scent like the hound; or that the mastiff may rival in talents and acquirements the sagacious and docile poodle." Lawrence on Physiology, &c.

QUESTION XXXIX.

HAS CLIMATE ANY SHARE IN PRODUCING THE DIVERSITIES OF NATIONAL CHARACTER?

"As to *physical causes*," says Hume, "I am inclined to doubt altogether of their operation in this particular; nor do I think, that men owe any thing of their temper or genius to the air, food, or climate. I confess, that the contrary opinion may justly, at first sight, seem probable; since we find, that these circumstances have an influence over every other animal; and that even those creatures, which are fitted to live in all climates, such as dogs, horses, &c., do not attain the same perfection in all. The courage of bull dogs and game cocks seems peculiar to England. Flanders is remarkable for large and heavy horses: Spain for horses

light and of good mettle. And any breed of these creatures, transplanted from one country to another, will soon lose the qualities which they derived from their native climate. It may be asked, why not the same with men? There are few questions more curious than this, or which will oftener occur in our inquiries concerning human affairs; and therefore it may be proper to give it a full examination." He accordingly proceeds to examine it at some length. See his Essay on National Characters, in vol. i of his Essays and Treatises.

In discussing this question, it will be useful to keep in remembrance the distinction between the *direct* and *indirect*, or, in other words, between the *physical* and *moral* influence of climate. Climates, doubtless, have a considerable influence on the minds and characters of men, by surrounding them with different circumstances. Where it is cold and inhospitable, and difficult to obtain food, man is obliged to exert himself. Where the climate is warm, and subsistence easily procured, he is apt to become indolent. These are instances of the *in-*

direct or *moral* influence. It is the direct or physical influence, which is the point in dispute. Montesquieu has endeavoured to trace it from its first action on the body to its final result on the mind.

"A cold air*," says he, "constringes the extremities of the external fibres of the body; this increases their elasticity, and favours the return of the blood from the extreme parts to the heart. It contracts† those very fibres; consequently it increases also their force. On the contrary, a warm air relaxes and lengthens the extremes of the fibres; of course it diminishes their force and elasticity. People are, therefore, more vigorous in cold climates. Here the action of the heart and the reaction of the extremities of the fibres are better performed, the temperature of the humours is greater, the blood moves freer towards the heart, and reciprocally the heart has more power. This superiority of strength must produce various effects; for instance, a greater boldness, that is, more courage; a greater sense of superiority, that is, less desire of revenge; a greater opinion of security, that is, more frankness, less suspicion, policy, and cunning. In short, this must be productive of very different tempers. Put a man into a close, warm place, and for the reasons above given he will feel a great faintness. If under this circumstance you propose a bold enterprise to him, I believe you will find him very little disposed towards it: his present weakness will throw him into a despondency; he will be afraid of every thing, being in a state of total incapacity. The inhabitants of warm countries are, like old men, timorous; the people in cold countries are, like young men, brave."

* "This appears even in the countenance; in cold weather people look thinner."

† "We know it shortens iron."

"In cold countries," he observes in another place, "they have very little sensibility for pleasure; in temperate countries, they have more; in warm countries, their sensibility is exquisite. As climates are distinguished by degrees of latitude, we might distinguish them also, in some measure, by those of sensibility.

I have been at the opera in England and in Italy, where I have seen the same pieces and the same performers; and yet the same music produces such different effects on the two nations, one is so cold and phlegmatic, and the other so lively and enraptured, that it seems almost inconceivable."

The reader will perceive, that in the above reasoning there is a great deal of assumption and hypothesis.

In the present day Montesquieu's physical knowledge cannot be looked upon with much respect, while he talks of the tendency to suicide amongst the English, arising from "a defect of the filtration of the nervous juice," and asserts in another place, that "you must flay a Muscovite alive to make him feel." Some of his expressions are curious: "at the time of the Romans," he says, "the inhabitants of the north of Europe were destitute of arts, education, and almost of laws; and yet *the good sense annexed to the gross fibres of those climates* enabled them to make an admirable stand against the power of Rome, till the memorable period

in which they quitted their woods to subvert that great empire."

His remarks on the "effects arising from the climate of England" are not the least amusing. "In a nation," he observes, "so distempered by the climate as to have a disrelish of every thing, nay even of life, it is plain, that the government most suitable to the inhabitants is that in which they cannot lay their uneasiness to any single person's charge; and in which, being under the direction rather of the laws than of the prince, it is impossible for them to change the government without subverting the laws themselves. And if this nation has likewise derived from the climate a certain impatience of temper, which renders them incapable of bearing the same train of things for any long continuance, it is obvious, that the government above mentioned is the fittest for them." See Spirit of Laws, book xiv.

This is surely giving physical causes a very undue predominance over moral ones.

QUESTION XL.

WHAT WERE THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION?

To produce an event of so tremendous a kind, a number of concurring causes must have been in operation. Among these the following have been generally considered as the chief: 1. The writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, and other philosophers, who disseminated very free notions on the subjects of government and religion. 2. The diffusion of the principles of freedom by those officers and soldiers, who returned to France, after having served in the armies of America. 3. The despotic nature of the government. 4. The oppression and extortion to which the peasantry were subjected by the nobles. 5. The retention of a number of forms and institutions not suited to the growing

knowledge and expanding spirit of the age. 6. The embarrassment of the finances, owing to the expensive wars, in which the nation had been engaged, and to domestic profusion. 7. The weak and vacillating character of the French monarch.

These are all causes, which, perhaps, more or less, contributed to the result; which either occasioned the revolution, or impressed upon it its peculiar character. There are, in fact, two inquiries on this subject, namely, what were the causes, which roused the people to change the form of government; and what were the causes, which gave so violent a character to their proceedings. With regard to the latter point, it is well observed by Madame de Staël, that "he has not thought much on the subject of civil commotions, who does not know that reaction is equal to the action. The extravagances of revolts supply the measure of the vices of institutions; and it is not to the government, which is wished for, but to that which has long existed, that we must ascribe the moral state of a nation. At present it is

said, that the French have been corrupted by the revolution. But whence came the inordinate propensities, which expanded themselves so violently in the first year of the revolution, if not from a century of superstition and arbitrary power?" Madame de Staël's Considerations on the Principal Events of the French Revolution, vol. ii, p. 121.

Lord Byron, in the appendix to his tragedy of the Two Foscari, in combating the notion, that the French revolution was owing to the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, and others, remarks, that "the French revolution was *not* occasioned by any writings whatsoever, but must have occurred had no such writers ever existed. It is the fashion," he continues, "to attribute every thing to the French revolution, and the French revolution to every thing but its real cause. That cause is obvious: the government exacted too much, and the people could neither *give* nor *bear more*. Without this, the Encyclopedists might have written their fingers off without the occurrence of a single alteration. And the English revolution

(the first I mean), what was it occasioned by? * * * Acts, acts on the part of government, and *not* writings against them, have caused the past convulsions, and are tending to the future." P. 327.

There is so much good sense, and so true a philosophical spirit in the following remarks of the late Professor Playfair, that we cannot resist the temptation of enriching our pages with them. Speaking of a singular work of Professor Robison's, entitled, Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe, he remarks, in his usual happy and perspicuous style, that "whatever opinion be formed of the facts related in the history of this conspiracy, it is certainly not in the visions of the German illuminati, nor in the ceremonials of free-masonry, that we are to seek the causes of a revolution, which has shaken the civilized world from its foundations, and left behind it so many marks which ages will be required to efface. There is a certain proportionality between causes and their effects, which we must

expect to meet with in the moral no less than in the natural world; in the operations of men, as well as in the motions of inanimate bodies. Whenever a great mass of mankind is brought to act together, it must be in consequence of an impulse communicated to the whole, not in consequence of a force, that can act only on a few. A hermit or a saint might have preached a crusade to the Holy Land with all the eloquence, which enthusiasm could inspire; but if a spirit of fanaticism and of chivalry had not pervaded every individual in that age, they would never have led out the armies of Europe to combat before the walls of Jerusalem. Neither could the influence of a small number of religious or philosophic fanatics sensibly accelerate or retard those powerful causes, which prepared from afar the destruction of the French monarchy. When opposed to these causes, such influence was annihilated; when co-operating with them, its effects were imperceptible. It was a force, which could only follow those already in action; it was like

'dashing with the oar to hasten the cataract,' or 'waving with a fan to give swiftness to the wind.'

"It is, however, much easier to say what were not, than what were the causes of the French revolution; and, in dissenting from Professor Robison, I will only remark in general, that I believe the principal causes to be involved in this maxim, that a certain relation between the degree of knowledge diffused through a nation, and the degree of political liberty enjoyed by it, is necessary to the stability of its government. The knowledge and information of the French people exceeded the measure that is consistent with the entire want of political liberty. The first great exigency of government, therefore, the first moment of a weak administration, could hardly fail to produce an attempt to obtain possession of those rights, which, though never enjoyed, can never be alienated. Such an occasion actually occurred, and the revolution which took place was entire and terrible. This also was to be expected; for there seems to be among politi-

cal institutions, as among mechanical contrivances, two kinds of equilibrium, which, though they appear very much alike in times of quiet, yet, in the moment of agitation and difficulty, are discovered to be very different from one another. The one is tottering and insecure, insomuch that the smallest departure from the exact balance leads to its total subversion. The other is stable; so that even a violent concussion only excites some vibrations backward and forward, after which every thing settles in its own place. Those governments, in which there is no political liberty, and where the people have no influence, are all unavoidably in the first of these predicaments: those, in which there is a broad basis of liberty, naturally belong to that in which the balance re-establishes itself. The same weight, that of the people, which in the first case tends to overset the balance, tends in the second to restore it: and hence, probably, the great difference between the result of the French revolution, and of the revolutions which formerly took place in this country.

"It will be happy for mankind, if they learn from these disasters the great lessons, which they seem so much calculated to enforce; and if, while the people reflect on the danger of sudden innovation, their rulers consider, that it is only by a gradual reformation of abuses, and by extending, rather than abridging, the liberties of the people, that a remedy can be provided against similar convulsions."

Biographical Account of Professor Robison, in Playfair's Works, vol. iv, p. 165, et seq.

QUESTION XLI.

ARE THERE ANY FEATURES IN MODERN CIVILIZATION, WHICH ARE LIKELY TO PRESERVE THE COUNTRIES ENLIGHTENED BY IT FROM SINKING INTO THAT BARBARISM, WHICH WAS THE ULTIMATE FATE OF ALL THE REFINED NATIONS OF ANTIQUITY?

THIS is one of the most interesting questions to which attention can be called, embracing a comparison between the distinctive characteristics of ancient and modern civilization. A short, but enlightened and eloquent discussion of it will be found in Dugald Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. i, chap. iv, sect. viii, where he particularly dwells on the important benefits of the modern

art of printing. The following extract needs no introductory encomium.

"Before closing this disquisition," says he, "it may be proper for me to attempt to obviate, a little more fully than I have done, an objection, which has been frequently drawn from the past experience of mankind, against the supposition of their progressive improvement, on which all the foregoing reasonings proceed. How mournful are the vicissitudes, which history exhibits to us, in the course of human affairs; and how little foundation do they afford to our sanguine prospects concerning futurity! If, in those parts of the earth, which were formerly inhabited by barbarians, we now see the most splendid exertions of genius, and the happiest forms of civil policy, we behold others, which, in ancient times, were the seats of science, of civilization, and of liberty, at present immersed in superstition, and laid waste by despotism. After a short period of civil, of military, and of literary glory, the prospect has changed at once; the career of degeneracy has begun, and has pro-

ceeded till it could advance no farther; or some unforeseen calamity has occurred, which has obliterated, for a time, all memory of former improvements, and has condemned mankind to retrace, step by step, the same path by which their forefathers had risen to greatness. In a word, on such a retrospective view of human affairs, man appears to be the mere sport of fortune and of accident; or, rather, he appears to be doomed, by the condition of his nature, to run alternately the career of improvement and of degeneracy; and to realise the beautiful but melancholy fable of Sisyphus, by an eternal renovation of hope and of disappointment.

"In opposition to these discouraging views of the state and prospects of man, it may be remarked in general, that in the course of these latter ages a variety of events have happened in the history of the world, which render the condition of the human race essentially different from what it ever was among the nations of antiquity; and which, of consequence, render all our reasonings concerning their future

fortunes, in so far as they are founded merely on their past experience, unphilosophical and inconclusive. The alterations, which have taken place in the art of war, in consequence of the invention of fire-arms, and of the modern science of fortification, have given to civilized nations a security against the irruptions of barbarians, which they never before possessed. The more extended, and the more constant intercourse, which the improvements in commerce and in the art of navigation have opened among the distant quarters of the globe, cannot fail to operate in undermining local and national prejudices, and in imparting to the whole species the intellectual acquisitions of each particular community. The accumulated experience of ages has already taught the rulers of mankind, that the most fruitful and the most permanent sources of revenue are to be derived, not from conquered and tributary provinces, but from the internal prosperity and wealth of their own subjects: and the same experience now begins to teach nations, that the increase of their own wealth,

so far from depending on the poverty and depression of their neighbours, is intimately connected with their industry and opulence; and consequently, that those commercial jealousies, which have hitherto been so fertile a source of animosity among different states, are founded entirely on ignorance and prejudice. Among all the circumstances, however, which distinguish the present state of mankind from that of ancient nations, the invention of printing is by far the most important; and, indeed, this single event, independently of every other, is sufficient to change the whole course of human affairs.

"The influence, which printing is likely to have on the future history of the world, has not, I think, been hitherto examined by philosophers with the attention, which the importance of the subject deserves. One reason for this may probably have been, that, as the invention has never been made but once, it has been considered rather as the effect of a fortunate accident, than as the result of those general causes on which the progress of so-

ciety seems to depend. But it may be reasonably questioned, how far this idea be just. For, although it should be allowed, that the invention of printing was accidental, with respect to the individual who made it, it may, with truth, be considered as the natural result of a state of the world, when a number of great and contiguous nations are all engaged in the study of literature, in the pursuit of science, and in the practice of the arts: insomuch, that I do not think it extravagant to affirm, that, if this invention had not been made by the particular person to whom it is ascribed, the same art, or some analogous art, answering a similar purpose, would have infallibly been invented by some other person, and at no very distant period. The art of printing, therefore, is entitled to be considered as a step in the natural history of man, no less than the art of writing; and they who are sceptical about the future progress of the race, merely in consequence of its past history, reason as unphilosophically as a member of a savage tribe, who, deriving

his own acquaintance with former times from oral tradition only, should affect to call in question the efficacy of written records in accelerating the progress of knowledge and of civilization.

What will be the particular effect of this invention (which has been, hitherto, much checked in its operation, by the restraints on the liberty of the press in the greater part of Europe), it is beyond the reach of human sagacity to conjecture; but, in general, we may venture to predict with confidence, that, in every country, it will gradually operate to widen the circle of science and civilization; to distribute more equally, among all the members of the community, the advantages of the political union; and to enlarge the basis of equitable governments, by increasing the number of those who understand their value, and are interested to defend them. The science of legislation, too, with all the other branches of knowledge, which are connected with human improvement, may be expected to ad-

vance with rapidity; and, in proportion as the opinions and institutions of men approach to truth and to justice, they will be secured against those revolutions, to which human affairs have always been hitherto subject. *Opinionum enim commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat.*"

QUESTION XLII.

ARE THERE JUST GROUNDS FOR BELIEVING THAT IMMORALITY IS INCREASING IN THE PRESENT AGE?

MEN are extremely apt to consider the age in which they live as far more vicious than preceding ones, and the causes of this tendency it would not be difficult to trace*. In the present day, the complaints on this head are innumerable; but, as such complaints are common to every generation, they would be entitled to little consideration now, were they not supported by documents showing the increase of

* "It may in part," to borrow the words of Professor Playfair, "be an effect of that perspective, which, in intellectual as in visible objects, represents the nearest as the largest, so as sometimes to deceive the justest eye, and the most impartial judgment."

crimes on a comparison with former years. Vague declamations may be allowed to pass for nothing; but these tabular exhibitions of facts form a species of argument demanding serious consideration. They are not, however, to be admitted as decisive of the controversy, for several reasons. 1. There may be greater facilities now, and greater activity in the detection of offences; in other words, more offences may be brought to light although fewer are actually committed. 2. In the progress of wealth and civilization it is found, that immorality changes its character; some vices become obsolete, while new ones are introduced; unless, therefore, we take into the comparison, which we institute between any two ages, vices and crimes of all sorts, we shall be apt to draw an erroneous conclusion as to their comparative merits. If we limit our attention to only one or two classes of offences, we may possibly find the present age materially degenerated. 3. Offences may be multiplied in particular years from accidental circumstances, which do not permanently affect the age. 4. Population

may be increased, and such an increase will necessarily present a greater array of vices and crimes, although the proportion which they bear to the population may remain the same, or even be diminished.

The following reasoning, directed against the hypothesis of an intellectual degeneracy in the human race, will equally apply to that of a moral one.

"If we may trust," says an elegant writer, "to a very ancient popular opinion, the energies of nature have, from the earliest records of society, been continually declining; so that the productions of her later years can stand in no degree of comparison with those of her more vigorous youth. From the days of Homer, this has been the general burthen of the poet's song, and has frequently been confirmed by the deliberate sanction of the philosopher. But although opinions mostly obtain credit by their antiquity, this opinion, in particular, derives no advantage from that circumstance. On the contrary, that very antiquity is the most decisive proof that it is wholly unfounded. If

the human race had declined from its pristine vigour between the period of the Trojan war and the time of Homer, to what a degree of imbecility must it have fallen in the reign of Augustus! And if, in like manner, the complaints of the Roman poets, of the deterioration of the human race, be well founded, to what a miserable state of degradation must it before this time have been reduced! After so long a descent, is it possible that nature could still have produced a Dante or an Ariosto? a Shakspeare or a Milton? a Corneille or a Racine? Names which, without an invidious competition with those of ancient times, will sufficiently show, that her vigour is not exhausted; but that she still continues to bring forth the fruits of the mind, no less than those of the earth, in all their original strength, quality, and flavour." A Discourse delivered on the opening of the Liverpool Royal Institution, by William Roscoe, Esq.

QUESTION XLIII.

ARE MANKIND HAPPIER AND MORE VIRTUOUS IN A STATE OF CIVILIZATION AND REFINEMENT, OR IN A STATE OF IGNORANCE AND BARBARISM?

DECLAMATIONS in favour of the times of rude and virtuous simplicity, when the vices of luxury and the corruptions of refinement were unknown, are become less frequent in our literature than they used to be. Perhaps there is now a greater tendency to the doctrine of *compensations*; the opinion, that every stage of civilization, while it gains some advantages, loses others which belonged to the preceding stage; and that, from the constitution of human nature, civilized and polished man derives no more pleasure from all the elegant arts and embellishments around him, than the barbarian from his simple implements, rough amusements, and rude accommodation.

An impression of this kind seems to have given birth to the following observations of D'Alembert.

"Such," says he, "is the unhappy lot of humanity, that the knowledge we acquire serves only to give us a mortifying view of the scenes of error and illusion through which we have passed, and is, almost always, attended with the diminution of our pleasures. The rude simplicity of our ancestors rendered the impressions they received from the monstrous productions of the ancient theatre more lively and striking than those which we receive, in this polished age, from the most perfect of our dramatic performances. The nations, which we surpass in knowledge and in refinement, are not less happy than we are; since both their desires and their wants are less numerous than ours, and they are satisfied with pleasures of a less elegant kind than those which we pursue. We should not, however, be willing to exchange our knowledge for the ignorance of those nations, or for the rude simplicity of our ancestors. For though this knowledge may diminish our pleasures, yet it flatters our vani-

ty. We applaud ourselves on account of that delicacy and refinement, that render us difficult to be pleased, and even look upon them as meritorious." Reflections on the Use and Abuse of Philosophy in matters that are properly relative to Taste.

The present question has been expressly discussed by Hume, in his masterly Essay on Refinement in the Arts, in which he endeavours to prove, that the ages of refinement are both the happiest and most virtuous. The paradoxical Rousseau, as is well known, supported the opposite opinion, both in his Treatise on the question* proposed by the academy of Dijon, and in his Emilius. He even pushed his opinions to the ridiculous extreme of asserting, "that the arts and sciences, philosophy, and the habits which it produces, will soon change Europe into a desert, and that learning corrupts morality."

* "Whether the sciences are more hurtful than useful to society?"

QUESTION XLIV.

IS IT TRUE, THAT AS THE BOUNDARIES OF SCIENCE ARE ENLARGED THE EMPIRE OF IMAGINATION IS DIMINISHED?

In the progress of society, a number of illusions, superstitions, and erroneous associations, which formerly produced a wonderful effect on the mind, and became powerful instruments in the hands of the orator and the poet, necessarily lose their influence. As things become better known, there is less room for the play of the imagination. Hence it is said the world has grown less poetical. In the words of Voltaire,

"On a banni les demons et les fées ;
Sous la raison les graces étouffées,

Livrent nos cœurs à l'insipidité ;
Le raisonner tristement s'accrédite ;
On court, hélas ! apres la vérité ;
Ah ! croyez moi, l'erreur a son mérite."

"Philosophy," says a very able writer in the Edinburgh Review, "which has led to the exact investigation of causes, has robbed the world of much of its sublimity: and by preventing us from believing much, and from wondering at any thing, has taken away half our enthusiasm, and more than half our admiration." Vol. xxi, p. 25.

"It cannot be concealed," says another modern critic, "that the progress of knowledge and refinement has a tendency to circumscribe the limits of the imagination, and to clip the wings of poetry. The province of the imagination is principally visionary, the unknown and undefined: the understanding restores things to their natural boundaries, and strips them of their fanciful pretensions. Hence the history of religious and poetical enthusiasm is much the same; and both have received a sensible shock from the progress of

experimental philosophy. It is the undefined and uncommon, that gives birth and scope to the imagination: we can only fancy what we do not know. As in looking into the mazes of a tangled wood, we fill them with what shapes we please, with ravenous beasts, with caverns vast, and drear enchantments, so, in our ignorance of the world about us, we make gods or devils of the first object we see, and set no bounds to the wilful suggestions of our hopes and fears.

'And visions, as poetic eyes avow,
Hang on each leaf, and cling to every bough.'"

See Hazlitt's Lectures on the English Poets, p. 18.

On the other hand, the discoveries of Science, particularly those of astronomy, have opened fresh fields for the imagination, and have added in various ways to the beauty and sublimity of natural objects. So at least thought Akenside when he wrote the following lines:—

"Nor ever yet
The smiling rainbow's vermeil-tinctured hues,

To me have shown so pleasing, as when first
The hand of science pointed out the path
In which the sun-beams, gleaming from the west,
Fall on the wat'ry cloud, whose darksome veil
Involves the orient."

The following passage, from the same author, owes all its sublimity to modern discoveries:—

"The high-born soul
Disdains to rest her heav'n-aspiring wing
Beneath its native quarry. Tir'd of earth,
And this diurnal scene, she springs aloft
Through fields of air, pursues the flying storm,
Rides on the vollied lightning through the heavens,
Or, yok'd with whirlwinds and the northern blast,
Sweeps the long track of day. Then high she soars
The blue profound, and, hov'ring round the sun,
Beholds him pouring the redundant stream
Of light; beholds his unrelenting sway
Bend the reluctant planets to absolve
The fated rounds of time: thence far effus'd
She darts her swiftness up the long career
Of devious comets, through its burning signs
Exulting measures the perennial wheel
Of nature, and looks back on all the stars,
Whose blended light, as with a milky zone,
Invests the orient. Now amaz'd she views

The empyreal waste, where happy spirits hold
Beyond this concave heav'n their calm abode,
And fields of radiance, whose unfading light
Has travell'd the profound six thousand years,
Nor yet arriv'd in sight of mortal things."

In the discussion of this subject, there is one consideration, which has been generally overlooked. It is evident, that as civilization advances, as the boundaries of science are enlarged, as the world grows older, there is a wider and wider field opening for imagination in the past. Every day is adding to the page of history, and Time is perpetually covering year after year, and century after century, with his visionary hues and sombre colouring, with the moss and ivy of association. Past events are gathering round them that power of awakening thought and feeling, which must ever belong to what is separated from us by the flood of ages. Here then imagination has a continually increasing empire, a territory in which she may always "reign and revel." Our finest poets have accordingly resorted to it for some of their most splendid passages,

and it may be fairly doubted whether modern poetry has not gained more from this single source, than she has lost by the dispersion of those powerful superstitions, which have fled the light of science,

"As Etna's fires grow dim before the light of day."

Where is the superstition, that could afford a finer range to the imagination than the following?—

"The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains.—Beautiful!
I linger yet with nature, for the night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man: and in her starry shade
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learned the language of another world.
I do remember me, that in my youth,
When I was wandering,—upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum's wall,
'Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome.
The trees, which grew along the broken arches,
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
The watch-dog bayed beyond the Tiber; and
More near from out the Cæsars' palace came

The owl's long cry, and, interruptedly,
Of distant centinels the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach
Appeared to skirt the horizon, yet they stood
Within a bow-shot—where the Cæsars dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
A grove which springs through levell'd battlements,
And twines its roots with the imperial hearths,
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth;—
But th' gladiators' bloody circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!
While Cæsar's chambers, and th' Augustan halls,
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay.—
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which softened down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and fill'd up,
As 'twere, anew, the gaps of centuries;
Leaving that beautiful, which still was so,
And making that which was not, till the place
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
With silent worship of the great of old!—
The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
Our spirits from their urns."

LORD BYRON'S MANFRED.

QUESTION XLV.

IS IMAGINATION IN ITS GREATEST VIGOUR IN THE RUDE PERIODS OF SOCIETY?

FROM the appearance of eminent poets in comparatively rude states of society, and also from the figurative eloquence of some savage tribes, it has been concluded, that the power of imagination is weakened in the progress of civilization. There is a short discussion of this subject in one of Stewart's philosophical essays, entitled "On the culture of certain intellectual habits connected with the first elements of taste." With regard to the figurative oratory of savage tribes, he remarks, "their diction is, indeed, highly metaphorical; but the metaphors they employ are either the unavoidable consequences of an imperfect language, or are inspired by the mechanical impulse of passion.

In both instances, imagination operates to a certain degree; but in neither is imagination the *primary* cause of the effect; inasmuch as in the one it is excited by passion, and in the other called forth by the pressure of necessity." Again: "The eloquence of savages is the natural offspring of passion, impatient to give vent to its feelings, and struggling with the restraints of a scanty vocabulary; and it implies none of those inventive powers, which are displayed in the creation of characters, of situations, of events, of ideal scenery; none of the powers, in short, which form the distinguishing attributes of poetic genius."

On the subject of the appearance of eminent poets, in rude ages, the same author observes, "Where particular circumstances have given any encouragement, among rude tribes, to the pacific profession of a bard; still more, where an *order* of bards has formed a part of the political establishment, individuals may be conceived to have occasionally arisen, whose poetical compositions are likely to increase in reputation as the world grows older. Obvious

reasons may be assigned why imagination should be susceptible of culture, at a period when the intellectual powers, which require the aid of experience and observation, must necessarily continue in infancy; and the very peculiarities, which, in such circumstances, its productions exhibit, although they would justly be regarded as blemishes in those of a more refined age, may interest the philosopher, and even please the critic, as characteristical of the human mind in the earlier stages of its progress. The same circumstances, too, which influence so powerfully the eloquence of the savage orator, furnish to the bard a language peculiarly adapted to his purpose, and in which the antiquaries of a distant age are to perceive numberless charms, of which the author was unconscious. In the compositions of such a poet, even the defects of his taste become, in the judgment of the multitude, proofs of the vigour of his imagination; the powers of genius, where they are irregularly displayed, producing, upon a superficial observer, an imposing but illusory effect in point of magnitude,

similar to that of an ill-proportioned human figure, or of a building which violates the established rules of architecture. No prejudice can be more groundless than this; and yet it seems to be the chief foundation of the common doctrine, which considers imagination and taste as incompatible with each other, and measures the former by the number and the boldness of its trespasses against the latter. My own opinion, I acknowledge, is, that, as the habitual exercise of imagination is essential to those intellectual experiments of which a genuine and unborrowed taste is the slow result; so, on the other hand, that it is in the productions of genius, when disciplined by an enlightened taste, that the noblest efforts of imagination are to be found.

"Nor is there any thing in these conclusions at all inconsistent with what I have already asserted concerning the dormant and inactive state of imagination in the mind of a savage; or with the account given, in the preceding essay, of the gradual process by which taste is

formed. To a professional bard, in whatever period of society he may appear, the exercise of his imagination, and, as far as circumstances may allow, the culture of his taste, must necessarily be the great objects of his study; and, therefore, no inference can be drawn from *his* attainments and habits to those of the mass of the community to which he belongs. The blind admiration with which his rude essays are commonly received by his contemporaries, and the ideas of inspiration and of prophetic gifts, which they are apt to connect with the efforts of his invention, are proofs of this; showing evidently, that he is then considered as a being to whose powers nothing analogous exists in the ordinary endowments of human nature." p. 544, octavo edition.

The present question is evidently very closely connected with the preceding one (whether, as the boundaries of science are enlarged, the empire of imagination is diminished?), since, if a state of high refinement and civilization did not afford much exercise for the imagination,

that faculty would necessarily lose something of its power and activity. These two inquiries are accordingly sometimes confounded, and regarded as the same, but it may perhaps facilitate both, if the distinction between them is kept in view.

QUESTION XLVI.

IS IT TRUE, THAT THE TASTE OF A NATION NECESSARILY BEGINS TO DEGENERATE, WHEN IT HAS REACHED THE HIGHEST POINT OF PERFECTION?

"THE taste of a nation," says Voltaire, "may degenerate, and become extremely depraved; and it almost always happens, that the period of its perfection is the forerunner of its decline. Artists, through the apprehension of being regarded as mere imitators, strike out into new and uncommon paths, and turn aside from the beautiful simplicity of nature, which their predecessors invariably kept in view. In these efforts there is a certain degree of merit, which arises from industry and emulation, and casts a veil over the defects which accompany their productions. The public, fond of novelty, ap-

plauds the invention. But this applause is soon succeeded by satiety and disgust. A new set of artists start up, invent new methods to please a capricious taste, and depart still further from nature than those who first ventured from its paths into the wilds of fancy. Thus the taste of a people degenerates into the grossest corruption. Overwhelmed with new inventions, which succeed and efface each other with incredible rapidity, they scarcely know where they are, and cast back their eager and anxious desires towards the period when *true taste* reigned under the empire of nature." Essay on Taste.

A similar doctrine occurs in Lord Kames's Sketches of Man. "A useful art," he observes, "seldom turns retrograde; because every one has an interest to preserve it in perfection. Fine arts depend on more slender principles than those of utility; and therefore the judgment formed of them is more fluctuating. The variety of form, that is admitted into the fine arts by such fluctuation of judgment, excites artists to indulge their love of

novelty. Restless man knows no golden mean, but will be attempting innovations without end. Such innovations do well in an art distant from perfection: but they are commonly the cause of degeneracy in arts that are in perfection: for an artist, ambitious to excel, aims always to be an original, and cannot submit to be an imitator."

Hume too, in his Essay on the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences, maintains, "that when the arts and sciences come to perfection in any state, from that moment they naturally, or rather necessarily decline, and seldom or never revive in that nation where they formerly flourished." The principal reason he assigns for this effect is, the discouragement, which the possession of models of excellence, not to be surpassed, necessarily gives to future efforts. "The posts of honour are all occupied." As far as his doctrine of a necessary decline concerns the fine arts, it is the same as Voltaire's in different language, the degeneracy of taste and of the fine arts being in this case equivalent expressions. But

the decline of the sciences, which Hume has very inconsiderately coupled with that of the arts, as if they depended on similar principles, is a totally different affair; and scarcely one of the arguments, which the authors above cited adduce to prove the latter, has any application to the former. The history of the physical and mathematical sciences abundantly proves, that the natural tendency of knowledge is to advance; nor is there a nation in Europe in which it has not made a progress. Science may occasionally be lost, but it can never retrogade. The same observations will also apply to the arts, in which we consult utility, and not the gratification of taste. Our question, therefore, relates exclusively to those arts, which depend on taste and sentiment. We may add, that the permanency of modern science has been brought before the reader under a preceding question.

Some remarks in reference to the present question may be found in Dr. Priestley's Lectures on History and General Policy, lecture l.

PART III.

QUESTIONS

IN

METAPHYSICS AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

QUESTION XLVII.

IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE HUMAN MIND A MERE SPECULATIVE SCIENCE, OR IS IT CAPABLE OF BEING RENDERED PRACTICALLY USEFUL?

It is remarkable enough, that while the physical and mathematical sciences, and every department of polite literature, have been cultivated in modern days with unexampled assiduity and success, the science, which has for its object to make us acquainted with the nature and extent of our own faculties, has raised comparatively little curiosity and interest. It is observed by one, whose eloquent pen has done more to render the subject popular than that of any other writer, that "the prejudice, which is commonly entertained against metaphysical speculations, seems to arise chiefly

from two causes: first, from an apprehension, that the subjects about which they are employed are placed beyond the reach of the human faculties; and, secondly, from a belief, that these subjects have no relation to the business of life.

"The frivolous and absurd discussions, which abound in the writings of most metaphysical authors, afford," he proceeds to say, "but too many arguments in justification of these opinions; and if such discussions were to be admitted as a fair specimen of what the human mind is able to accomplish in this department of science, the contempt, into which it has fallen of late, might with justice be regarded as no inconsiderable evidence of the progress which true philosophy has made in the present age. Among the various subjects of inquiry, however, which, in consequence of the vague use of language, are comprehended under the general title of metaphysics, there are some, which are essentially distinguished from the rest, both by the degree of evidence which accompanies their principles, and by

the relation which they bear to the useful sciences and arts: and it has unfortunately happened, that these have shared in that general discredit, into which the other branches of metaphysics have justly fallen. To this circumstance is probably to be ascribed the little progress which has hitherto been made in the PHILOSOPHY OF THE HUMAN MIND; a science so interesting in its nature, and so important in its applications, that it could scarcely have failed, in these inquisitive and enlightened times, to have excited a very general attention, if it had not accidentally been classed, in the public opinion, with the vain and unprofitable disquisitions of the schoolmen."

Mr. Stewart then enters into dissertations on the nature and object of the science of mind, and on its utility or practical application, for which the reader is referred to the Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, Introduction, parts i and ii. In reply to the claims, which this enlightened philosopher urges on behalf of his favourite science, a critic in the

Edinburgh Review contends, that its practical utility is inconsiderable; that *in metaphysics certainly knowledge is not power;* and he supports these opinions with talent and plausibility. Mr. Stewart has answered his arguments at some length, and, in the judgment at least of all true lovers of the subject, has triumphantly refuted them. See Stewart's Philosophical Essays, Preliminary Dissertation, chap. ii; and Edinburgh Review, vol. iii, p. 269, et seq.

Dr. Thomas Brown has expatiated at considerable length on the applications of which this science is susceptible, in his Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind, published since his death—a most acute and original work. See the first four lectures. Nor ought we to omit to notice, on this occasion, the short, but excellent introduction to Locke's immortal work on the Human Understanding, in which he touches on some of the important advantages of an acquaintance with the extent of our faculties. "Since it is the understanding," says he, "that sets man above the rest

of sensible beings, and gives him all the advantage and dominion, which he has over them; it is certainly a subject, even for its nobleness, worth our labour to inquire into. The understanding, like the eye, whilst it makes us see and perceive all other things, takes no notice of itself; and it requires art and pains to set it at a distance, and make it its own object. But whatever be the difficulties, that lie in the way of this inquiry; whatever it be, that keeps us so much in the dark to ourselves; sure I am, that all the light we can let in upon our own minds, all the acquaintance we can make with our own understandings, will not only be very pleasant, but bring us great advantage, in directing our thoughts in the search of other things."

In the admirable introduction to Hume's Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding, entitled, Of the different Species of Philosophy, that profound writer has presented us with an ingenious vindication of metaphysical studies, and has shown, to use his own words, that "there are many positive advantages, which

result from an accurate scrutiny into the powers and faculties of human nature." "Some instances," he observes in another place, "especially late ones, of success in these inquiries, may give us a juster notion of the certainty and solidity of this branch of learning. And shall we esteem it worthy the labour of a philosopher to give us a true system of the planets, and adjust the position and order of those remote bodies; while we affect to overlook those, who with so much success delineate the parts of the mind, in which we are so intimately concerned?" Essays and Treatises, vol. ii.

One advantage attending the cultivation of this science, and which is particularly enlarged upon by Mr. Stewart, is the light which it throws on the subjects of moral and intellectual education. How far it has already been of service in this respect, may be seen in those works on education, which have endeavoured to reduce its principles to application; such as the works of Mr. and Miss Edgeworth, and Mrs. Hamilton.

QUESTION XLVIII.

DO THE FACULTIES OF MEN DIFFER FROM THOSE OF BRUTES IN KIND, OR ONLY IN DEGREE?

It is a common remark, that we often become better acquainted with a thing by comparing it with something else than by considering it alone. It is chiefly on this account that the present question is deserving of notice. A comparison or contrast of the faculties of mankind with those of the lower animals may throw some light on the philosophy of mind, or at least present some of its phenomena in a more striking point of view.

Locke places the distinction between men and brutes in the incapacity of the latter to abstract and form general ideas. "This," says he, "I think I may be positive in, that the power of abstracting is not at all in them;

and that the having of general ideas is that, which puts a perfect distinction betwixt man and brutes; and is an excellency, which the faculties of brutes do by no means attain to. For it is evident we observe no footsteps in them of making use of general signs for universal ideas; from which we have reason to imagine, that they have not the faculty of abstracting, or making general ideas, since they have no use of words, or any other general signs*." Essay on the Understanding, book ii, chap. xi. Some other remarks on the same subject occur in that and the preceding chapter.

There is a discussion of the present question in Brewster's Edinburgh Encyclopedia, article Brute, which terminates in the conclusion, that "the difference, between the human and the brutal constitution, is a difference of kind as well as of degree."

* This is the remark of a *nominalist*, and of course would not be admitted by a *relationist*, or one who took the same view of the nature of general signs as the late Dr. Thomas Brown.

The reader will also find some remarks upon it in Dr. Beattie's chapter on the Memory of Brutes, in his Dissertations Moral and Critical.

He may likewise consult Dugald Stewart's Outlines of Moral Philosophy, part i, sect. xii, in which there are a few short hints terminating in the conclusion, that "a great variety of considerations prove, that, in respect of our intellectual and moral principles, our nature does not admit of comparison with that of any other inhabitant of the globe; the difference between our constitution and theirs, being a difference, not in degree, but in kind. Perhaps, this is the single instance," he continues, "in which that regular gradation, which we everywhere else observe in the universe, fails entirely."

In this last opinion Stewart is at variance with some other writers. Soame Jenyns, in his disquisition on the Chain of Universal Being, after telling us that by instinct man is often impelled, "like the herring and the mackerel, to hasten to his own destruction, for the public benefit, which he neither under-

stands or cares for," proceeds to say, that "animal life rises in this low beginning in the shell-fish, through innumerable species of insects, fishes, birds, and beasts, to the confines of reason, where, in the dog, the monkey, and chimpanzè, it unites so closely with the lowest degree of that quality in man, that they cannot easily be distinguished from each other."

Should any reader, seduced by the title, look into a work, which professes to be A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man with those of the Animal World, by Dr. John Gregory, of Edinburgh, he will be disappointed in the expectation of finding an inquiry into the present subject. Instead of learning any thing of the distinguishing characteristics of human and brute nature, he will find himself involved in a dissertation on the proper treatment of children and lying-in women, the impropriety of rocking, and the evils of over-feeding; and if he proceed farther, he will fall in with an essay on music, and the circumstances to be attended to in its composition and performance. In a word, beyond a

few pages, the book has no correspondence whatever with the title; a discrepancy, indeed, which the doctor acknowledges in his preface. It is but justice to add that although the book throws no light on the present subject, it contains a number of judicious observations on a variety of topics, expressed in an easy, fluent, and lively style.

QUESTION XLIX.

WHAT IS THE PROPER REFUTATION OF BERKELEY'S THEORY OF THE NON-EXISTENCE OF MATTER?

THE refutation of this theory by Dr. Reid, who is generally regarded as the most formidable antagonist of idealism, may be said to consist of two parts: first, he endeavoured to show, that we had no evidence for the existence of ideas distinct from the mind itself; and as the theory of the non-existence of the external world was founded on the supposition of such separate ideas, it necessarily fell to the ground when that basis was removed: secondly, he proved, that the belief of an external world is an instinctive principle implanted in every mind, not derived from any process of reasoning, but unavoidable and irre-

sistible; and that the existence of matter was necessarily assumed by those authors who called it in question, in the very act of writing against it.

That the first part of this refutation overturns Berkeley's arguments in favour of idealism, can scarcely be questioned; but it has been recently contended by Dr. Thomas Brown, that it by no means overturns the theory itself, which may be as strongly supported without the help of the doctrine of ideas distinct from the mind as with it.

"I cannot," says he, "but consider Berkeley's ideal system as presenting a very imperfect and inaccurate view, not merely of the real phenomena of the mind, but even of the sceptical argument against the existence of matter." * * * "Though the scepticism may be *consistent* with the belief of ideas as separate existences in the mind, it does not *depend* in the slightest degree on their existence or non-existence. We have only to change the term ideas into the synonymous phrase affections, or states of the mind, and the scepticism, if not

stronger, is at least in strength exactly what it was before. In the one case the sceptic will say, that we are sensible of ideas only, not of external objects, which may have no resemblance to our ideas; in the other case, that perception is but a state of the mind, as much as any of our other feelings; and that we are conscious only of this, and other states or affections of our mind, which have variously succeeded each other, and not of external objects, which themselves can be no parts of that train of mental consciousness. Whatever weight there may be in the former of these sceptical theories, exists, I may say, even with greater force, because with greater simplicity, in the second; and the task, therefore, of proving *by logic* (if logical proof were requisite for our belief) the existence of a material world would remain as laborious as before, after the fullest confutation of the system, which might suppose perception to be carried on by the medium of little images of bodies in the mind.

"All that remains, then, to supply the place

of logical demonstration, which would be needless where the belief is as strong as that of demonstration itself, is the paramount force of this universal and irresistible belief; and there is no fear that this can be weakened by any argument, or be less felt by him who denies it, than by him who asserts it. We are conscious, indeed, only of the feelings that are the momentary states of our own mind; but some of these it is absolutely impossible for us not to ascribe to causes that are external, and independent of us; and the belief of a system of external things is one of those very states of mind, which itself forms, and will ever form, a part of the train of our consciousness." Lecture xxviii, vol. ii, p. 52. See also the two preceding lectures. The reader is referred for further information to the following works:—

Berkeley's Principles of Human Knowledge, and Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous. Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind, and Essays on the Intellectual Powers. Dugald Stewart's Elements, chap. i, and Philosophical Essays, part i, essay ii. Hume's Treatise on Human Nature.

QUESTION L.

IS THE MIND OF MAN THE RESULT OF MATERIAL ORGANIZATION, OR IS IT AN IMMATERIAL PRINCIPLE DISTINCT FROM THE BODY?

A PHILOSOPHER, whom we have had occasion to quote more than once, and to whose opinions frequent reference cannot but be made in the discussion of metaphysical questions, remarks, that "instead of objecting to the scheme of materialism, that its conclusions are false, it would be more accurate to say, that its aim is unphilosophical. It proceeds," he continues, "on a misapprehension of the proper object of science; the difficulty, which it professes to remove, being manifestly placed beyond the reach of our faculties. Surely,

when we attempt to explain the nature of that principle, which feels, and thinks, and wills, by saying, that it is a material substance, or that it is the result of material organization, we impose on ourselves by words; forgetting, that matter as well as mind is known to us by its qualities and attributes alone, and that we are totally ignorant of the essence of either." Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. i, Introduction.

In these observations there is much good sense and propriety, although it may be rash to pronounce that the difficulty is placed beyond the reach of our faculties, as we cannot possibly tell what may be the future achievements of science, nor how much our methods of reasoning and investigation may be hereafter perfected*. In the actual condition of

* In hazarding this remark on the sentence pronounced by Mr. Stewart, we are sensible that we subject ourselves to the imputation of not understanding the full force of it; but it is so probable, that many difficulties in metaphysics, ascribed to other causes, may arise simply from the imperfection of language, and may consequently be hereafter

knowledge, however, the present inquiry must be owned to be of little use. We require to know the laws, which regulate the phenomena of mind and of body, not the essence of either, if by the term essence thus employed any thing definite is really understood. It is well, nevertheless, to become acquainted with the grounds of the controversy, were it only, that we might clearly see the nature of that difficulty, which, according to the author last quoted, is placed beyond the reach of our powers.

To the charge brought against the materialist, that he imposes on himself by words, he may probably reply, that the remark cuts both ways. He that attempts to explain the nature of the thinking principle, by saying that it is immaterial, assuredly, it may be retorted, imposes on himself by words, as much as he who attempts to explain it by saying,

cleared up, by a closer analysis of terms, that we hesitate to declare any inquiry into our own nature beyond our reach, or at least beyond a solution perfectly satisfactory to every mind.

that it is a material substance, or the result of material organization. Is it not, therefore, "a misapprehension of the extent and limits of genuine science" to have any hypothesis on the subject at all?

The present, it may be remarked, is another of those inquiries, which are supposed to be of a dangerous tendency, as if doctrines important to mankind could not bear a rigid scrutiny; as if there was something hollow and unsound in that system, which it is essential to human happiness should be upheld, or as if the human faculties were possessed with an irresistible bias to error. The system of the materialist may be erroneous, and therefore injurious; but assuredly the discussion of it must on the whole be beneficial, inasmuch as it will raise the truth into more universal and accurate apprehension.

A very elaborate discussion of this question will be found in Dr. Priestley's Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit, and in his published correspondence on the subject with Dr. Price. See also Dr. Beattie's Elements of

Moral Science, Appendix; Dr. Brown's Lectures on the Human Mind, lectures xcvi, xcvii, xcviii; and Stewart's Outlines of Moral Philosophy, part ii, chap. ii.

Dr. Brown is a determined opponent of materialism: he calls it a doctrine "absolutely absurd:" he even goes so far as to say, that the assertor of the doctrine, "in affirming the principle of thought to be material, makes an affirmation very nearly the same in kind, or, at least, as contradictory, as if he were to pronounce of a whole, that it is essentially different from its constituent parts." Mr. Stewart's language in his Outlines is almost equally strong.

QUESTION LI.

ARE THERE ANY CONCLUSIVE ARGUMENTS FOR THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, OR FOR A FUTURE STATE, INDEPENDENTLY OF REVELATION?

On this question even religious men are by no means unanimous, some contending, that without revelation we should possess very slight grounds for a belief in a future state; while on the other hand it is maintained, that the light of nature alone presents us with abundant evidence of an existence hereafter. The reader will find some ingenious reasoning on this subject in Butler's Analogy.

Dr. Beattie, in his Elements of Moral Science, discusses the following questions:—1. Does the light of nature, unaided by revelation, afford any reason to think, that the soul

of man *may possibly* survive the body? 2. Does the light of nature afford any reason to believe, that the soul *will actually* survive the body? The result of the discussion is, that "all the arguments taken together amount to such a high probability as can hardly be resisted by any rational being. Yet we must acknowledge," continues the Doctor, "that unassisted reason makes this matter only in a very high degree probable."

Dr. Brown considers, that the chief argument for the immortality of the soul is its immateriality. "If matter be all, and that which thinks and feels decay like every other part of the body, though the cause of immortality may even then not be absolutely hopeless, it must be allowed to have many difficulties not easy to be removed." He first, therefore, endeavours to prove, that the soul is an immaterial principle distinct from the body, and then on this doctrine grounds the argument for its immortality in the following manner: Every atom of the body exists after death, not a single particle is annihilated; and

if the soul is an immaterial principle distinct from the body, we cannot infer, from the continued existence of every particle of our physical frame, that the soul itself will *not* continue to exist. This would be to argue, that, "because death is a process, in which every thing corporeal continues to exist; therefore, all that is mental ceases to exist. It would not be easy," continues Dr. Brown, "to discover a link of any sort, that might be supposed to connect the two propositions of so very strange an enthymeme."

"The assertor of the soul's immortality," he remarks in another place, "if the existence of the soul, as a separate substance, be previously demonstrated, has not so much to assign reasons for the belief of its immortality, as to obviate objections, which may be urged against that belief. At the moment of death, there exists the spirit; there exist also the corporeal atoms at that moment: the Deity allows every atom to subsist as before. The spirit too, if he do not annihilate it, will subsist as before. If we suppose him to annihilate it, we must suppose him to have some reason for annihi-

lating it. Is any such reason imaginable, either in the nature of the spirit itself, or in the character of the Deity?"

Some of the commonest and most favourite arguments for the immortality of the soul are considered by Dr. Brown as unsound, such as the universal desire after a future existence, and the eager and unremitting wish for something better than this life affords: the arguments, in fact, which the celebrated soliloquy of Addison's Cato has rendered familiar to every ear. See Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. iv, lectures xcvi, xcvii, and xcviii.

Dr. Watson, the late Bishop of Landaff, repeatedly declared, that he had no hope of a future existence, except that which is grounded on the truth of Christianity. See particularly his letter to Gibbon, in the Bishop's Anecdotes of his own Life, vol. i, p. 107. Mr. Stewart, on the contrary, is of opinion, that the natural evidences of a future state, though singly perhaps inefficient to establish the truth, have an irresistible force when combined. See Outlines of Moral Philosophy, part ii, chap. ii.

QUESTION LII.

IS THERE ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SHAPE AND SIZE OF THE BRAIN AND THE QUALITIES OF THE MIND; OR, IN OTHER WORDS, IS THERE ANY TRUTH IN THE SYSTEM OF CRANIOLOGY PROMULGATED BY GALL AND SPURZHEIM?

WHEN this subject is first mentioned to such as have never turned their attention to it, it is usually treated with ridicule; nor can it be denied, that to men in general, with the feelings and associations prevalent in the present state of society, there is something ludicrous in the idea, that the prominences of the skull should be indications of mental qualities. The question, however, is a question of fact: nor if the system were true would it be more wonderful than any other fact in nature. At present

there are sufficient reasons why a sincere inquirer after truth, a real *naturæ interpres et minister*, should not discard the subject with a sneer, as too ridiculous for investigation. There is an almost universal impression, that the shape of the head is in some way or other connected with the qualities of the mind. It has been found, too, that amongst the lower animals the relative size of the cranium is a tolerably sure indication of the rank which the species holds, in point of sagacity and general powers of intellect. The same criterion is said by naturalists to hold good in comparing the different races of men. As therefore it is universally allowed, that the brain is the organ of thought, and as the general form of the cranium, which depends upon that of the brain, appears to have some connection with mental properties, is it an improbable inference, that its particular prominences and depressions should indicate particular qualities of the mind?

The craniologist considers the brain as a congeries of separate organs, each disposition

and power of the mind having an organ of its own, which is expressed by a prominence on the cranium, varying in size according to the degree in which the disposition or power exists. The only proof of which this doctrine is susceptible must evidently consist in an extensive induction of facts. If it is found, that a certain quality of mind is invariably accompanied by a certain prominence of the cranium, and that in cases of the want of that quality, or its existence in an insignificant degree, the prominence is invariably deficient, we have all the evidence for a connection between the mental property and the physical conformation, that we have for the connection of any other two phenomena in nature. Observation, therefore, is the test by which we must try the validity of the doctrine; and it is only doing justice to its advocates to say, that this is the test, which they have challenged their antagonists to apply with all the rigour of suspicion and incredulity. Some men of talents are said to have become converts to the system, from having

verified a great part of it by their own experience.

Besides the works of Dr. Gall and Dr. Spurzheim, the reader may consult Combe's Essays on Phrenology (the newest name for the science), and Illustrations of Phrenology by Sir James Stewart Mackenzie. Mr. Combe's work is one of considerable ability, and evidently the production of a sincere, thorough, and almost enthusiastic convert to the system. On the opposite side of the question, we have An Inquiry into Dr. Gall's System concerning Innate Dispositions, by J. P. Tupper, M. D.; and also various articles in Reviews and Encyclopedias.

QUESTION LIII.

WHAT TRUTH IS THERE IN THE DOCTRINE OF PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY?

THIS long contested question, styled by Hume "the most contentious question of metaphysics, the most contentious science," is still undecided, or rather the world is still divided upon it, owing probably to some difference in the meaning attached to the terms employed, or perhaps from a vague and confused apprehension of the object of the inquiry. "From this circumstance alone," says the philosopher just mentioned, "that a controversy has been long kept on foot, and remains still undecided, we may presume that there is some ambiguity in the expression, and that the disputants affix different ideas to the terms employed in the controversy. For as the faculties of the mind

are supposed to be naturally alike in every individual (otherwise nothing could be more fruitless than to reason or dispute together) it were impossible, if men affix the same ideas to their terms, that they could so long form different opinions of the same subject; especially when they communicate their views, and each party turn themselves on all sides, in search of arguments, which may give them the victory over their antagonists."

The section of Hume's Inquiry into the Human Understanding, from which this is an extract, and which is devoted to a discussion of the question of liberty and necessity, is full of ingenious argument and profound thought. It is chiefly an application of his doctrine of causation and necessary connection to moral actions. He endeavours to show, that as in physical events all that we know of causation is the constant conjunction of objects, so in voluntary actions we have discovered all that we mean by the term necessity, when we have found a similar conjunction and regularity.

"It would seem," says he, "that men be-

gin at the wrong end of this question, concerning liberty and necessity, when they enter upon it by examining the faculties of the soul, the influence of the understanding, and the operations of the will. Let them first discuss a more simple question, namely, the operations of body and brute unintelligent matter; and try whether they can there form any idea of causation and necessity, except that of a constant conjunction of objects, and subsequent inference of the mind from one to another. If these circumstances form, in reality, the whole of that necessity which we conceive in matter, and if these circumstances be also universally acknowledged to take place in the operations of the mind, the dispute is at an end; at least must be owned to be thenceforth merely verbal."

One of the ablest works, which has ever appeared on the present subject, is unquestionably Dr. Jonathan Edwards's Treatise on the Will. The closeness and acuteness of its reasoning have seldom been surpassed; but it is so redundant in its matter, and so diffuse as well

as uncouth in its style, that its merits are seldom duly appreciated. An able abridgment of it would be a valuable service rendered to literature. Those, who are acquainted with its *numerous* masterly arguments, will be surprised at the declaration of the author of Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, that there is only *one* argument in favour of the necessarian doctrine worth listening to. Mr. Stewart, after remarking that the ablest advocates for the necessity of human actions have exerted their ingenuity to show, "that there is nothing in this tenet, which does not perfectly accord with our internal consciousness, when our supposed feelings of liberty, with all their concomitant circumstances, are accurately analyzed, and duly weighed," proceeds to observe, "this, I own, appears to me the only argument for the scheme of necessity, which deserves a moment's consideration, in the present state of the controversy: and it is certainly possible to state it in such a form as to give it some degree of plausibility to a superficial inquirer. On this point, however, as on many

others, our *first* and *third* thoughts will be found perfectly to coincide; a more careful and profound examination of the question infallibly bringing back to their natural impressions those who reflect on the subject with candour and with due attention." Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. ii, p. 74, octavo edition, note.

As Mr. Stewart accords with Hume in his doctrine concerning cause and effect, it will be naturally asked how he invalidates the application of it to voluntary actions; or at least what are his reasons for thinking, that Hume's very ingenious argument drawn from that source is not deserving "a moment's consideration."

It is worthy of remark, that in the discussion of this question both parties have accused each other of the pernicious tendency of their principles. This consideration may be fairly left out of the controversy. All inquiry has truth for its object, and proceeds on the necessary assumption, that truth cannot be pernicious. To endeavour to cast odium on other men for

opinions opposite to his own is generally the resource of one, who feels that his arguments are exhausted. It is in most instances a symptom of weakness; always of either ignorance or malevolence.

Besides the works already cited, the inquirer may consult the following:—

Locke's Essay on the Understanding, book ii, chap. xxi. Dr. Priestley's Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity illustrated. Dr. Hartley's Observations on Man. Lord Kames's Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion, and his Sketches of Man. Dr. Price's Review of the Principal Questions in Morals. Dr. Beattie's Essay on Truth, and Elements of Moral Science. Dr. Coplestone's Inquiry into Necessity and Predestination. Dr. Cogan's Ethical Questions.

QUESTION LIV.

MAY THE MOTIVES OF ALL OUR ACTIONS BE RESOLVED INTO A REGARD FOR SELF-INTEREST?

THIS is another of those questions about which there has been a great deal of controversy, owing either to the vagueness of the terms employed, or to a want of precise and clear ideas of the difficulty to be solved. In the discussion of such a subject we are liable at every step to be led astray by the ambiguity of language.

To explain the state of the controversy we shall borrow the words of Dr. Carpenter, in his Principles of Education.

"Two opposite principles," says he, "have long been entertained, and are still often advanced on this subject. Some have main-

tained, that the human mind, in all its feelings and promptings to action, is influenced by selfish motives; that, in fact, there is no action, or feeling, which can be called disinterested. Others have, with more success, maintained, that the mind can be, and often is, disinterested; that a person frequently performs an action, tending to the good of others in a greater or less degree, without the remotest reference to himself, with no other motive than a desire to produce the benevolent effect proposed. The degrading system of the former," he continues, "is seldom adopted except by speculative men, who have been led by circumstances, happily not universal, to see merely the dark side of human nature, and to form a more gloomy picture of its selfishness than truth would allow: or by others, who have expected too much, owing to the beautiful speculations of theory; and having been disappointed by comparing them with their own feelings in many instances, or with the too general conduct of mankind, have hence gone into the unfounded opinion, that

all the actions of all men are selfish." P. 220, &c.

The reader will probably derive some light from the following observations of Bentham, extracted from his tract, entitled, A Table of the Springs of Action.

"In regard to interest, in the most extended, which is the original and only strictly proper sense, of the word disinterested, no human act ever has been, or ever can be disinterested. For there exists not ever any voluntary action, which is not the result of the operation of some motive or motives: nor any motive, which has not for its accompaniment a corresponding interest, real or imagined. In the only sense in which disinterestedness can with truth be predicated of human action, it is employed in a sense more confined than the only one, which the etymology of the word suggests, and can with propriety admit of: what, in this sense, it must be understood to denote, being not the absence of all interest, a state of things, which, consistently with voluntary action, is not possible, but only the

absence of all interest of the *self-regarding* class."—"If what is above be correct, the most disinterested of men is not less under the dominion of interest than the most interested. The only cause of his being styled disinterested is, its not having been observed, that the sort of motive (suppose it sympathy for an individual, or a class of individuals) has as truly a corresponding interest belonging to it, as any other species of motive has."

For our own part, we would suggest, whether the difficulty might not be readily solved by a due consideration of the real meaning of the term motive. In this word there is some little ambiguity. We sometimes use it to denote the passion or emotion under the influence of which an action is performed. Thus we say, that Cæsar usurped the Roman empire from the motive of ambition: and that Brutus in stabbing Cæsar was actuated by love for his country. At other times we use the term to signify the particular *view* with which an action was performed, or in other words the thing, which the mind desired o

accomplish by the performance of the action. We say, for instance, that Brutus's motive in putting Cæsar to death was to rid his country of a tyrant. This seems to be the proper sense of the term, and, therefore, the present question might be stated as follows:—Is that, which the mind desires to accomplish by the performance of an action, invariably some specific benefit to ourselves; is it some distinct self-advantage, which we have in view, or which is the predominant idea in our minds, or which we propose to ourselves as the end of our action? If not, then the present question is surely decided.

There is still, however, one objection, which may be urged. We feel uneasiness, it may be said, while our desires are unaccomplished, and pleasure when they are fulfilled; and it is to get rid of this uneasiness, or to obtain this pleasure, that we invariably act. In reply to this objection, we shall borrow the words of Dr. Brown.

"Though every thing," he remarks, "which we desire must have seemed to us desirable,

as the very fact of the desire denotes, and though the attainment of every such desire must be attended with pleasure, it does not therefore follow, that the pleasure, which truly attends this fulfilment of desire, was the primary circumstance, which excited the desire itself. We may feel happiness from exertion of every kind, from society, from the discovery of truth, from the good fortune of our friends, and yet have desired these without any view, at the moment of the beginning desire, to this resulting happiness, and merely from the constitution of our nature, which leads us to desire knowledge simply as knowledge, because there is something of which we are ignorant, and which we may readily learn; society simply as society. Nature, indeed, has attached pleasure to these, as she has attached pleasure to many of our functions, which we do not exercise on account of that pleasure. But, in considering the origin of our desires, we are to think only of what is contemplated by the mind at the very moment when the emotion arises, of the circumstances antecedent to the

desire, and not of circumstances, which may or may not be its consequents." Lecture lxvi.

In a work of the late Dr. Cogan's, entitled, Ethical Questions, there is a short discussion of a similar question to that before us, but stated in different terms, namely, "Is benevolence a principle distinct from self-love, or a modification of it." This inquiry he afterwards resolves into two: "first, does every act of benevolence originate from self-love, in such a manner that self-interest or self-gratification is the grand incitement at the time of performance? Secondly, may not the most exalted of the benevolent affections be traced to self-love as the origin?" In the discussion of these questions the author has evinced considerable ingenuity, and his work may be consulted with advantage.

See also Hutcheson's System of Moral Philosophy, book i, chap. iii. Dr. Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, part vi. Dugald Stewart's Outlines of Moral Philosophy, part ii, chap. i, sect. v and vi.

QUESTION LV.

IS HUMAN NATURE ENDOWED WITH A MORAL SENSE, TO PERCEIVE MORAL PRINCIPLES, IN A MANNER ANALOGOUS TO THE ORGANS OF SENSE, IN THE PERCEPTION OF EXTERNAL OBJECTS?

SUCH is the language in which a very subtile question in moral philosophy is stated by Dr. Cogan, in his Ethical Questions. We shall make further use of his assistance in explaining it.

After mentioning several instances of instantaneous moral sentiment, he proceeds, "These facts appearing, from the promptitude and almost universality of their operation, not to be within the province of reason, are supposed to require a principle superadded to the guidance of reason; a kind of auxiliary, whose quicker influence is better adapted to urgent occasions.

"The moral philosophers, who entertain these opinions, have given to the proposed principle the title of a *moral sense.* Thus it is supposed, that there is a sixth sense in man, which is subservient to moral purposes, analogous to the five senses, which maintain his connection with sensible objects. They assert, that the eye does not distinguish with more certainty and readiness between black and white in colours, or the ear between harmonious and discordant sounds, or the touch between rough and smooth, than the mind distinguishes between the excellency and deformity of moral conduct. Hence they infer, that the Author of our frame has added another sense, appropriated to the discernment of moral objects; and that, as we never consult our reason whether our optics shall be delighted or offended, by certain impressions respecting size, shape, colour, distance; or whether our palate shall be disgusted or gratified with particular viands; thus do our approbation and disapprobation of human actions appear to be equally instantaneous, and equally

to reject the necessity of reasoning upon the subject." For the objections, which the Doctor urges against this theory, we must refer the reader to the work itself.

Dr. Hutcheson, it is well known, was the first who maintained this doctrine of a moral sense, and he may still be considered as its ablest advocate. The following succinct and perspicuous statement of his opinions, is extracted from Adam Smith's admirable Theory of Moral Sentiments.

"Dr. Hutcheson had been at great pains to prove, that the principle of approbation was not founded on self-love. He had demonstrated too, that it could not arise from any operation of reason. Nothing remained, he thought, but to suppose it a faculty of a peculiar kind, with which nature had endowed the human mind, in order to produce this one particular and important effect. When self-love and reason were both excluded, it did not occur to him, that there was any other known faculty of the mind, which could in any respect answer this purpose.

"This new power of perception he called a moral sense, and supposed it to be somewhat analogous to the external senses. As the bodies around us, by affecting these in a certain manner, appear to possess the different qualities of sound, taste, odour, colour; so the various affections of the human mind, by touching this particular faculty in a certain manner, appear to possess the different qualities of amiable and odious, of virtuous and vicious, of right and wrong.

"The various senses, or powers of perception, from which the human mind derives all its simple ideas, were, according to this system, of two different kinds, of which the one were called the direct or antecedent, the other, the reflex or consequent senses. The direct senses were those faculties, from which the mind derived the perception of such species of things as did not presuppose the antecedent perception of any other. Thus sounds and colours were objects of the direct senses. To hear a sound, or to see a colour, does not presuppose the antecedent perception of any other

quality or object. The reflex or consequent senses, on the other hand, were those faculties from which the mind derived the perception of such species of things as presupposed the antecedent perception of some other. Thus harmony and beauty were objects of the reflex senses. In order to perceive the harmony of a sound, or the beauty of a colour, we must first perceive the sound or the colour. The moral sense was considered as a faculty of this kind. That faculty, which Mr. Locke calls reflection, and from which he derived the simple ideas of the different passions and emotions of the human mind, was, according to Dr. Hutcheson, a direct internal sense. That faculty, again, by which we perceived the beauty or deformity, the virtue or vice of those different passions and emotions, was a reflex internal sense.

"Dr. Hutcheson endeavoured still farther to support this doctrine, by showing that it was agreeable to the analogy of nature, and that the mind was endowed with a variety of other reflex senses exactly similar to the moral sense;

such as a sense of beauty and deformity in external objects; a public sense, by which we sympathize with the happiness or misery of our fellow-creatures; a sense of shame and honour; and a sense of ridicule." Theory of Moral Sentiments, part vi, sect. iii.

Dr. Smith, after this lucid exposition of the doctrine in question, adduces several arguments against it, which are too long to be quoted here, but which are well worth the attention of every inquirer. Dr. Brown has also some observations upon it in the fourth volume of his Lectures. Mr. Dugald Stewart, in his Outlines of Moral Philosophy, seems to object to Dr. Hutcheson's language rather than his conclusions. His short explanation of the controversy on this subject will be found instructive. See part ii, chap. i, sect. vi.

QUESTION LVI.

ARE THE VARIETIES OF INTELLECT AND DISPOSITION AMONG MANKIND TO BE ASCRIBED SOLELY TO THE INFLUENCE OF EDUCATION AND EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES, OR ARE THEY PARTLY OWING TO INDIVIDUAL CONSTITUTION?

WE cannot do better with the present question than discuss it in the words of a highly respectable modern writer.

"The opinion," says Dr. Carpenter, "'that every thing in the intellectual and moral system is the result of education, has had some ingenious supporters; but it can never stand the test of accurate observation. If every human being could be placed in precisely the same circumstances for the first few months after birth, and could be exposed to exactly

similar impressions in every respect, there is no room for reasonable doubt, that still great diversities would be manifest in their dispositions and capacities. We infer this, because the rudiments of disposition and capacity are obviously different when we have first the power of discerning them; and it is inconceivable, that the few impressions, which are received within two weeks after birth, should of themselves produce all that diversity, which, even then, is in many instances clearly perceptible to the accurate observer. In some, even at that early period, it may be distinctly perceived, that the sensitive powers are quick and lively; in others, they are dull and sluggish: and this early aptitude to receive sensations with different degrees of vividness, must arise from a difference in the original system, over which education will seldom be found to triumph. Greater or less degrees of physical sensibility, are the foundation of greater or less degrees of mental sensibility; and it is, in a great measure, upon the vigour of our early sensations, that the furniture of

the mind, the thoughts, and affections, depend for their strength and durability. Besides, suppose what we will with respect to the precise degree in which the mental system depends upon the conformation of the brain, more or less the former must be affected by the latter; and while the external structure, and the external organs of the mind, so essentially differ in different children, as soon as mind is at all perceptible, it is reasonable to suppose, that the internal structure, and the more concealed corporeal system, on which the offices of the mind depend, must also be essentially different." Principles of Education, by Dr. Carpenter, p. 5.

Helvetius, in his works on the Mind and on Man, is the most thorough and decided assertor of the natural equality of all men in point of intellect. "I regard," says he, "the understanding, the virtue, and genius of man, as the product of instruction;" and he considers this doctrine as in the highest degree salutary. "If I can demonstrate," he says, "that man is, in fact, nothing more than the

product of his education, I shall doubtless reveal an important truth to mankind. They will learn, that they have in their own hands the instrument of their greatness and their felicity; and that to be happy and powerful, nothing more is requisite than to perfect the science of education." Of course he uses the term education in its most extensive acceptation, including the operation of all circumstances on the mind.

QUESTION LVII.

ARE MEN GIFTED BY NATURE WITH PARTICULAR PREDISPOSITIONS AND APTITUDES FOR SOME PURSUITS IN PREFERENCE TO OTHERS, OR ARE THOSE STRONG DETERMINATIONS OF THE INTELLECT AND THE FEELINGS, WHICH WE OFTEN WITNESS, PRODUCED BY CIRCUMSTANCES OPERATING ON THE MIND IN THE PROGRESS OF LIFE?

THIS question has been frequently brought into discussion by a passage in Dr. Johnson's Life of Cowley. "In the window of his mother's apartment," says the biographer, speaking of the poet, "lay Spenser's Fairy Queen, in which he very early took delight to read, till, by feeling the charms of verse, he became, as he relates, irrecoverably a poet. Such are the

accidents, which, sometimes remembered, and perhaps sometimes forgotten, produce that particular designation of mind, and propensity for some certain science or employment, which is commonly called Genius. The true genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction. Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great painter of the present age, had the first fondness of his art excited by the perusal of Richardson's treatise."

There are three theories on this subject. One is, that all men commonly well organized are equal in talents by nature; and that the greatest abilities, as well as the most decided propensities, are owing to the circumstances wherein the individual has been placed. Another theory is, that there are natural degrees of intellect, but that no man is more fitted by nature for one pursuit than another; that the peculiar determination of the poet and the mathematician to their respective pursuits is the result of accident, and not of innate aptitude. A third theory considers men as born not only with different degrees of mental power, but

with peculiar biases and aptitudes for some pursuits in preference to others. The first has already been brought under the consideration of the reader in the preceding inquiry: the second is the opinion expressed by Dr. Johnson, in the extract given above, and has had a number of supporters: the third must of course be adopted by all believers in the various systems of physiognomy and craniology, and is in fact the doctrine generally entertained, as many of our current proverbs, such as *Poeta nascitur non fit*, will abundantly testify.

QUESTION LVIII.

DOES IMAGINATION BECOME LESS VIGOROUS AS MEN ADVANCE IN LIFE?

"We will allow a poet," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "to express his meaning, when his meaning is not well known to himself, with a certain degree of obscurity, as it is one source of the sublime. But when, in plain prose, we gravely talk of attending to times and seasons, when the imagination shoots with the greatest vigour, whether at the summer solstice or the equinox, sagaciously observing, how much the wild freedom and liberty of imagination is cramped by attention to vulgar rules; and how this same imagination begins to grow dim in advanced age, smothered and deadened by too much judgment: when we talk such language, and entertain such sentiments as these, we ge-

nerally rest contented with mere words, or at best entertain notions, not only groundless but pernicious." "I can believe, that a man, eminent when young for possessing poetical imagination, may, from having taken another road, so neglect its cultivation as to show less of its powers in his latter life. But I am persuaded, that scarce a poet is to be found, from Homer down to Dryden, who preserved a sound mind in a sound body, and continued practising his profession to the very last, whose latter works are not as replete with the fire of imagination, as those which were produced in his more youthful days." Seventh Discourse, vol. i of his collected Works.

The same opinion is maintained by Mr. Stewart in his Philosophical Essays, essay iv, chap. i.

It might be instructive to apply Dr. Brown's theory of our mental powers to such questions as these. He reduces our intellectual faculties to two, namely, simple and relative suggestion. Imagination is resolved into the former, at least in a great measure, for it is impossible

that the operation of relative suggestion should be excluded from any train of simple conceptions. When we take also into account the desire which exists in the mind, while engaged in the process of invention, and which gives a common relationship to the parts of the train of thought, we have, according to the learned Professor, a full explanation of the phenomena of imagination.

"With the exception," says he, "of the permanent desire, and the primary conceptions involved in it, there is nothing more to be found in the process [of imagination], at least nothing more, which can be considered as essential to the process, than a sequence of conceptions after conceptions, such as takes place in the most ordinary train of thought, and intermingled feelings of relation, such as arise in other ordinary cases of relative suggestion. The phenomena of imagination, in short, are proofs of those general tendencies of the mind by which we are susceptible of simple suggestion, of relative suggestion, and of desire, but not of any specific faculty additional to

these." Sketch of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, p. 247.

To apply this theory, which cannot be fully understood without a reference to the works in which it appears, we must inquire, first, Whether age has any tendency to diminish the activity of simple suggestion? and, secondly, Whether it diminishes the desire of invention? For, if either of these effects were produced, imagination would be less vigorous. We must not forget, in this view of the subject, the effect of habit, by which all ideas related to any favourite pursuit are more and more readily suggested as we proceed in it; so that a painter or poet, who is continually practising his profession, acquires as he advances in life a facility and copiousness of suggestion, which may compensate for any physical inertness induced by years, or for that increased tendency to what Dr. Brown calls relative suggestion, and what in common language is called the exercise of reason or judgment, which experience necessarily brings. It is indeed an admitted fact, that as men grow older their ideas

succeed each other more according to their logical relations than according to the principles of resemblance or proximity: and as in any train of thought it is the predominance of mere conceptions over feelings of relation, which gives it the character of a process of the imagination, the predominance of simple over relative suggestion, it seems an inevitable conclusion, that the tendency of increasing age is to render the mind less imaginative, provided there is no counteracting influence from exercise or habit.

Our limits restrain us from doing more than thus pointing out the way in which Dr. Brown's system of the human mind may be applied to the solution of the question before us.

QUESTION LIX.

MAY ALL BEAUTY AND SUBLIMITY BE RESOLVED INTO THE EFFECT OF ASSOCIATION; OR ARE THERE SOME QUALITIES IN MATERIAL OBJECTS, NATURALLY ADAPTED TO PRODUCE EMOTIONS OF BEAUTY AND SUBLIMITY, INDEPENDENTLY OF ANY ASSOCIATIONS WHATEVER?

It is almost needless to mention, that this subject has been treated with great fulness and elegance of illustration, by Mr. Alison, in his Essays on Taste. Mr. Stewart has also some remarks upon it, in his Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. i, chap. v, part ii, sect. ii; and likewise in his Philosophical Essays, part ii, essay i, chap. vi. Both these writers seem to concur in the opi-

nion, that although there are qualities in objects originally and intrinsically *pleasing*, yet it is by association that they become *beautiful;* consequently all beauty is the effect of association. Dr. Thomas Brown has taken a different view of the subject. He thinks it probable, "that the mind has some original tendencies to receive impressions of beauty from certain objects rather than from others." He by no means, however, denies the paramount influence of association. "Though it may be false," he observes, "that all the pleasure of beauty is derived from adventitious circumstances, it is certainly true, at least, that our most valuable pleasures of this class are derived from circumstances, with which our imagination has learned to embellish objects. The only reasonable question is, not whether the chief emotions, which we now term *emotions* of beauty, be referable to this source, but whether we must necessarily refer to it every emotion of this class, of every species and degree." He then proceeds to offer some reasons, which, in his opinion, render it probable (and he considers the subject to admit only a

comparison of mere probabilities), that we are endowed with original susceptibilities to receive impressions of beauty from some objects rather than others, or, in common language, that some objects possess qualities originally adapted to produce emotions of beauty.

The most valuable part of Dr. Brown's examination of Mr. Alison's theory is that which is directed against the supposition, that the exercise of the imagination in a train of thought is necessary to the production of the emotions in question; a point, which well merits a separate discussion. Allowing that these emotions are the effect of association, in what way does association operate to produce them? Mr. Alison contends, that it operates to produce them by suggesting a train of ideas; that the emotion of beauty consists of some simple emotion, and of the delight attending the exercise of the imagination in a succession of harmonizing images. Dr. Brown argues on the other hand, that the feeling of beauty is immediately consequent on the perception of the beautiful form, before any train of ideas has commenced; that in fact the feel-

ing itself is immediately suggested by the object, without the intervention of any extraneous images: that "the direct suggestion," to make use of his own language, "is an amount of particular delight, associated with the particular object." "It is the subsequent suggestion of trains of associate images, increasing perhaps the effect of the emotion, that existed previously as a state of the mind, but not producing it, which has led the very ingenious theorist, to whom I have before alluded," continues Dr. Brown, "to ascribe to these mere consequences of the feeling of beauty, that very feeling itself, which more probably gave occasion to them. Indeed, if the suggestion of particular images after images be essential to the very existence of the emotion, it seems to me quite impossible to account for that instant, or almost instant delight, which beauty, in its form of most powerful attraction, seems to beam on the very eye that gazes on it." See Dr. Brown's Lectures, liii to lviii.

The inquirer into the merits of Mr. Alison's theory will find an able review of the Essays on Taste in the Edinburgh Review, vol. xviii.

QUESTION LX.

IS THERE ANY STANDARD OF TASTE?

THIS question is intimately connected with the inquiry into the origin of our emotions of sublimity and beauty. If there are certain qualities in material objects naturally fitted to produce those emotions, then there must be a real standard of taste. If we resolve beauty into the effect of association, this may not be equally apparent. Taste in that case may seem to be completely arbitrary and fluctuating, and yet perhaps a closer consideration of the matter may show, that this does not necessarily follow, since there may be common circumstances, by which all mankind are irresistibly led in certain cases to form the same associations. The search for a standard of taste would then be an inquiry into those as-

sociations, which men thus universally acquire. It is the number of individual, and local, and temporary, and accidental associations, which makes it appear as if in matters of taste there were no fixed principles.

See Hume's Essay on the Standard of Taste. Alison's Essays on Taste. Kames's Elements of Criticism. Dr. Beattie's Dissertations Moral and Critical, p. 138 and 192. Sir Joshua Reynolds's Seventh Discourse to the Students of the Royal Academy. Knight's Principles of Taste, Introduction. Burke's Inquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful, Introduction.

The conclusion at which Hume arrives is, "that amidst all the variety and caprice of taste, there are certain general principles of approbation or blame, whose influence a careful eye may trace in all operations of the mind. Some particular forms or qualities, from the original structure of the internal fabric, are calculated to please, and others to displease; and if they fail of their effect in any particular instance, it is from some apparent defect or imperfection in the organ."

The Edinburgh Reviewers, in their critique on Alison's Essays, make the following remarks on this subject:—

"The only other advantage," they say, "which we shall specify as likely to result from the adoption of Mr. Alison's theory, is, that it seems calculated to put an end to all those perplexing and vexatious questions about the standard of taste, which have given occasion to so much impertinent, and so much elaborate discussion. If things are not beautiful in themselves, but only as they serve to suggest interesting conceptions to the mind, then every thing, which does in point of fact suggest such a conception to any individual, is *beautiful* to that individual; and it is not only quite true, that there is no room for disputing about tastes, but that all tastes are equally just and correct, in so far as each individual speaks only of his own emotions. When a man calls any thing beautiful, he may indeed mean to make two very different assertions: he may mean, that it gives him pleasure by suggesting to him some interesting emo-

tion; and, in this sense, there can be no doubt, that, if he merely speak truth, the thing *is* beautiful; and that it pleases him precisely in the same way, that all other things please those to whom they appear beautiful. But if he mean to say, that the thing possesses some quality, which ought to make it appear beautiful to any other person, and that it is owing to some prejudice or defect in them, if it appear otherwise, then he is as unreasonable and absurd, as he would think those, who should attempt to convince him, that he felt no emotion of beauty. All tastes, then, are equally just and true, in so far as concerns the individual whose taste is in question; and what a man feels distinctly to be beautiful, is *beautiful* to him, whatever other people may think of it. All this follows clearly from the theory of Mr. Alison; but it does not follow from it, that all tastes are equally good or desirable, or that there is any difficulty in describing that, which is really the best, and the most to be envied. The only use of the faculty of taste is to afford an innocent delight, and to

aid the cultivation of a finer morality; and that man certainly will have the most delight from this faculty, who has the most numerous and most powerful perceptions of beauty. But, if beauty consist in the reflection of our affections and sympathies, it is plain, that he will see the most beauty whose affections are warmest and most exercised, whose imagination is the most powerful, and who has most accustomed himself to attend to the objects by which he is surrounded. In so far as mere feeling and enjoyment are concerned, therefore, it seems evident, that the best taste must be that which belongs to the best affections, the most active fancy, and the most attentive habits of observation. It will follow pretty exactly too, that all men's perceptions of beauty will be nearly in proportion to the degree of their sensibility and social sympathies; and that those, who have no affections towards sentient beings, will be just as insensible to beauty in external objects, as he, who cannot hear the sound of his friend's voice, must be deaf to its echo.

"In so far as the sense of beauty is regarded

as a mere source of enjoyment, this seems to be the only distinction that deserves to be attended to; and the only cultivation that taste should ever receive, with a view to the gratification of the individual, should be through the indirect channel of cultivating the affections and powers of observation. If we aspire, however, to be *creators* as well as observers of beauty, and place any part of our happiness in ministering to the gratification of others, as artists, or poets, or authors of any sort, then, indeed, a new distinction of tastes, and a far more laborious system of cultivation, will be necessary. A man, who pursues only his own delight, will be as much charmed with objects, that suggest powerful emotions, in consequence of personal and accidental associations, as with those that introduce similar emotions, by means of associations that are universal and indestructible. To him, all objects of the former class are really as beautiful as those of the latter; and, for his own gratification, the creation of that sort of beauty is just as important an occu-

pation. But if he conceive the ambition of creating beauties for the admiration of others, he must be cautious to employ only such objects as are the *natural* signs and *inseparable* concomitants of emotions, of which the greater part of mankind are susceptible; and his taste will *then* deserve to be called bad and false, if he obtrude upon the public, as beautiful, objects that are not likely to be associated in common minds with any interesting impressions." Vol. xviii, p. 43 et seq.

QUESTION LXI.

HOW ARE WE TO ACCOUNT FOR THE PLEASURE WHICH THE MIND RECEIVES FROM TRAGIC REPRESENTATIONS?

An account of some attempts to solve this problem will be found in Hume's Essay on Tragedy. L'Abbé Dubos refers the pleasure in question to the love of excitement; of whatever will rouse the passions, and take the attention of the mind from itself. Fontenelle resolves it into the mixture of sentiments produced by the sight of affliction, and the thought that it is fictitious. This last reflection, he imagines, softens the pain arising from the contemplation of misfortunes, and converts it into pleasure. Hume thinks both these explanations correct, as far as they go; but that something is still wanting to complete the solution,

and he finds this something in the eloquence and art of the composition, added to the pleasurable effect produced by imitation. He seems to ascribe a good deal of the complex result to the conversion of painful into pleasant emotions, affirming, that when the melancholy passions are overpowered by something stronger of an opposite kind, the whole impulse of those passions is converted into pleasure.

The reader may probably derive some assistance, in solving this difficulty, from the following observations of another writer.

"It is far from being true, that we are agreeably affected by every thing that excites our sympathy." "The view or relation of mere misery can never be pleasing. We have, indeed, a strong sympathy with all kinds of misery; but it is a feeling of pure, unmixed pain, similar in kind, though not equal in degree, to what we feel for ourselves on the like occasions; and never produces that melting sorrow, that thrill of tenderness, to which we give the name of pity." "Extreme bodily pain is,

perhaps, the most intense suffering we are capable of; and if the fellow feeling with misery alone was grateful to the mind, the exhibition of a man in a fit of the tooth-ach, or under a chirurgical operation, would have a fine effect in a tragedy. But there must be some other sentiment combined with this kind of instinctive sympathy, before it becomes in any degree pleasing, or produces the sweet emotion of pity. This sentiment is love, esteem, the complacency we take in the contemplation of beauty, of mental or moral excellence, called forth and rendered more interesting by circumstances of pain and danger. Tenderness is, much more properly than sorrow, the spring of tears; for it affects us in that manner whether combined with joy or grief; perhaps more in the former case than the latter." See An Enquiry into those kinds of Distress, which excite agreeable Sensations, in Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose, by J. and A. L. Aikin.

Dr. Campbell, in his excellent work, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, book i, chap. xi, enters into an elaborate discussion of the whole

subject. The chapter is entitled, "Of the cause of that pleasure, which we receive from objects or representations that excite pity and other painful feelings." He examines successively the hypotheses of L'Abbé Dubos, Fontenelle, Hume, and Hawksworth (in the Adventurer, No. 110), and after having endeavoured to point out their errors and defects, he proposes one of his own, which corresponds in part with the remarks in the preceding extract from Aikin. But his observations are too long and various to be compressed within our limits. The reader is therefore referred to the work itself for a knowledge of his whole theory. See also an Essay by Dr. Barnes, in the Memoirs of the Manchester Society, vol. i, entitled, On the Pleasure, which the Mind in many Cases receives, from contemplating Scenes of Distress; and Payne Knight's Principles of Taste, part iii, chap. i.

PART IV.

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS.

QUESTION LXII.

IS RIDICULE THE TEST OF TRUTH?

MUCH has been said, and much written on the present question, but often in so vague a manner as to inspire a suspicion, that those engaged in the controversy had no very clear or definite ideas of the matter in dispute. The first step ought to be, to determine the precise meaning of the position, that ridicule is the test of truth; and we apprehend it may be reduced to this, that *nothing can be true which can be made to appear ridiculous.* To enable the reader to decide upon the justness of this proposition, we shall present him with the opinions of several distinguished writers. Lord Shaftesbury, in whose works the maxim is said to have been first enunciated, explains it in the following manner:—

"I have often wondered," says he, "to see men of sense so mightily alarmed at the approach of any thing like *ridicule* on certain subjects, as if they mistrusted their own judgment. For what ridicule can lie against reason? Or how can any one, of the least justness of thought, endure a ridicule wrong placed? Nothing is more ridiculous than this itself. The vulgar, indeed, may swallow any sordid jest, any mere drollery or buffoonery, but it must be a finer and truer wit, which takes with the men of sense and breeding. How comes it to pass, then, that we appear such cowards in reasoning, and are so afraid to stand the test of ridicule? O! say we, the subjects are too grave. Perhaps so; but let us see first whether they are really grave or no; for, in the manner we may conceive them, they may peradventure be very grave and weighty in our imagination, but very ridiculous and impertinent in their own nature. *Gravity* is of the very essence of imposture. It does not only make us mistake other things, but is apt perpetually almost to mistake itself. For, even in

common behaviour, how hard is it for the grave character to keep long out of the limits of the formal one? We can never be too grave, if we can be assured we are really what we suppose. And we can never too much honour or revere any thing for grave, if we are assured the thing is grave as we apprehend it. The main point is to know always true gravity from the false, and this can only be by carrying the rule constantly with us, and freely applying it, not only to the things about us, but to ourselves. For if unhappily we lose the measure in ourselves, we shall soon lose it in every thing besides. Now what rule or measure is there in the world, except in the considering of the real temper of things, to find which are truly serious, and which ridiculous? And how can this be done, unless by applying the ridicule, to see whether it will bear?"

Again:

"That which can be shown only in *a certain* light is questionable. Truth, 'tis supposed, may bear *all* lights, and *one* of those

principal lights, or natural mediums, by which things are to be viewed, in order to a thorough recognition, is ridicule itself, or that manner of proof by which we discern whatever is liable to just raillery in any subject: so much, at least, is allowed by all who at any time appeal to this criterion. The gravest gentlemen, even in the gravest subjects, are supposed to acknowledge this, and can have no right, 'tis thought, to deny others the freedom of this appeal, whilst they are free to censure like other men, and in their gravest arguments make no scruple to ask, *Is it not ridiculous?*" Characteristics, p. 10 and 61, vol i.

Dr. Johnson pronounces the following opinion on the subject: —

"The result of all the arguments," says he, "which have been produced, in a long and eager discussion of this idle question, may easily be collected. If ridicule be applied to any position as the test of truth, it will then become a question, whether such ridicule be just; and this can only be decided by the ap-

plication of truth as the test of ridicule. Two men fearing, one a real, and the other a fancied danger, will be for a while equally exposed to the inevitable consequences of cowardice, contemptuous censure, and ludicrous representation; and the true state of both cases must be known before it can be decided whose terror is rational, and whose is ridiculous; who is to be pitied, and who is to be despised: both are for a while equally exposed to laughter, but both are not, therefore, equally contemptible."

In reply to the question, is ridicule fit to be made use of as a *test of truth*, a living author (Mr. Jeremy Bentham) makes the following observations: —

"That depends upon where it is fetched from, whether from without or from within: if from without, no." [That is (as Mr. Bentham explains by an example), if ridicule is cast upon a subject by presenting along with it some other trifling one with which it has no connection material to the purpose in hand.]

"But if it be by matter taken from the subject itself, and necessarily belonging to it, that the ridicule is reflected upon it, no argument can be fairer, nor can there be in this case a fairer *test of truth*, that is, a surer proof that what is given for truth is not so, than what is applied, when, by the matter thus drawn from the notion itself, the quality of *ridiculousness* is shown to belong to it. Such is the case, in so far as any position, which is either a necessary consequence of the one in question, or necessary to be advanced to form a *ground* for it, is to a certain degree *absurd*; namely, to such a degree as to appear *ridiculous*: the more palpably absurd it is, the more flagrantly ridiculous."

In one of the notes to Akenside's Pleasures of the Imagination, it is maintained, that "ridicule is not concerned with mere speculative truth or falsehood. It is not in abstract propositions or theorems, but in actions or passions, good and evil, beauty and deformity, that we find materials for it; and all these terms are relative, implying approbation or

blame. To ask, then, whether ridicule be a test of truth, is, in other words, to ask whether that which is ridiculous can be morally true, can be just and becoming; or whether that, which is just and becoming, can be ridiculous; a question that does not deserve a serious answer."

QUESTION LXIII.

IS THERE ANY TRUTH IN THE OPINION, THAT NORTHERN CLIMATES ARE UNFAVOURABLE TO THE FINE ARTS?

It was once thought, that the climates of the north were unfavourable, not only to the fine arts, but to all works of imagination. Amongst others, the Author of Paradise Lost seems to have entertained this notion. "An opinion," says Dr. Johnson, "wanders about the world, and sometimes finds reception among wise men; an opinion that restrains the operations of the mind to particular regions, and supposes that a luckless mortal may be born in a degree of latitude too high or too low for wisdom or for wit. From this fancy, wild as it is, he (Milton) had not wholly cleared his head, when he feared lest the *climate* of his country might be *too cold* for flights of imagination."

But although the admirable and powerful works of imagination, which have been produced in northern latitudes, have pretty well settled the question with regard to *them*, it is still maintained by many, that the fine arts, particularly painting and sculpture, find formidable obstacles in the severities of climate. Nor is this opinion without plausibility. There is at the outset the grand fact, that the finest works of art have been produced in warm regions, beneath clear and sunny skies. It seems reasonable too, that where fine weather permits the inhabitants of a country to spend a great part of their time in the open air, they should become more alive to the beauties of form and colour in natural objects than those who are pent up in their houses the greater portion of the year, and who must of necessity have recourse to in-door enjoyments.

"It is my firm opinion," says Lord Kames, "that neither temper nor talents have much dependence on climate. I cannot discover any probable exception, if it be not a taste for the fine arts. Where the influence of the sun is great, people are enervated with heat:

where little, they are benumbed with cold. A clear sky, with moderate heat, exhibit a very different scene: the cheerfulness they produce disposes men to enjoyment of every kind. Greece, Italy, and the Lesser Asia, are delicious countries, affording variety of natural beauties to feast every sense: and men, accustomed to enjoyment, search for it in art as well as in nature; the passage from the one to the other being easy and inviting. Hence the origin and progress of statuary and of painting, in the countries mentioned." Sketches of Man, Preliminary Discourse, p. 48, vol. i, octavo edition.

Late years have done much to diminish the prejudices on this subject. The beautiful works of art produced by our Wests, Haydons, Wilkies, Flaxmans, Chantreys, and other eminent men, are so many standing arguments and irresistible demonstrations, that neither taste nor genius is to be measured by the thermometer. Yet while they prove the possibility of the attainment of great excellence in the fine arts under the English climate, they by no means warrant the conclusion, that all climates

are equally favourable to the production of these splendid monuments of human skill. The works alluded to may be instances only of genius surmounting the physical difficulties, which press around it. Our question asks not whether these difficulties can be overcome, but whether they exist. Dr. Knox, in contending, that the English possess a fine taste for sculpture, observes, "if it was late before our artists made any considerable proficiency in sculpture, it must not be immediately inferred, that they were incapable of excellence: but that, as it is incontestably true, they did not attempt it. To expect, that the art should attain perfection before it is an object of national attention, is no less unreasonable than to require the fruit in maturity before the plantation of the tree." These remarks may be true, but the question still recurs, why were we so late in our attention to this art? and we shall probably find the cause in the comparative inhospitality of our climate. See Knox's Essays, essay lxviii.

QUESTION LXIV.

HAS THE POETRY OF A NATION MUCH INFLUENCE ON ITS MORAL CHARACTER?

We cannot do better than introduce this subject in the words of one, who was himself both a poet and a philosophical observer of the effects of poetry. The passage may be considered as a favourable and finished specimen of his prose style.

"So various are the external circumstances, that determine, I will not say the whole character, but many of those particular actions, by the repetition of which the general character may be insensibly modified, that it would be absurd to endeavour to estimate, in any case, the amount of influences, which must vary with almost every accident in the life of every individual. Yet, if such an analysis could be

made, there can be no doubt, that one very important element would be found to be the poetry of the country. Every one is acquainted with the saying of the old Scotch patriot, Fletcher of Salton, who cared little what the laws of a people were, if only he had the making of their ballads: and though we may not perhaps be willing to admit the paradox, to the whole extent of its literal import, it may be readily admitted to the limited extent in which he probably meant it to be understood. The notions of vice and virtue, that are truly effective, are not those which we call up in our grave inquiries into the principles of morals and the practical duties of man, but those which float along the mind spontaneously in the very hour or moment of action. There is a morality of our current trains of thought, not arranged indeed as a system of principles in regular order, but a mixed result of lessons, and examples, and reflections, and accidental associations of pleasure and pain, of the most interesting events, that have impressed us with admiration, or

pity, or indignant resentment; the sublime and pathetic expressions of those, who have heroically dared or suffered; the pointed maxims of sages and wits; and still more than any of these, because most easy to be remembered, that happy eloquence of verse, which, in conveying to us moral truths, has impressed them on our hearts in a manner that made it impossible for us to forget them. These, united, form as it were one active moral impulse, the persuasive force of which, except in cases of very strong passion, or very powerful temptation, is constantly operating, in some greater or less degree, on the conduct of all, who have not been absolutely uninstructed. Even under the most depressing government, and under superstition, still more wretchedly debasing, it co-operates with the great native principle within us, in preserving feelings, that might otherwise have been clouded or overwhelmed. The bard has not lost, in the civilized world, the function, which he is represented as exercising more directly in a simpler and wilder state of society. He is a legislator still, fashioning our

conduct, even when we are not conscious that we are obeying him: and, when other circumstances are equal, it is impossible to doubt, that the nation must be the most virtuous, in which poets after poets, in bright succession, have been the most lavish of all the rich treasures of their art, in the embellishment of sentiments of virtue." Preface to the Paradise of Coquettes, a poem by Dr. Thomas Brown.

QUESTION LXV.

HAS A TASTE FOR THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE AND THE FINE ARTS ANY INFLUENCE FAVOURABLE TO MORALS?

THAT a taste of this kind has a favourable influence on the moral character has been generally maintained. This opinion has been supported by Lord Kames, in his Elements of Criticism, Gerard, in his Essay on Taste, Dr. Percival, in his Moral Dissertations, Lord Shaftesbury, in his Characteristics, and by other writers. In the Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, there is an Essay by the Rev. Samuel Hall, in which he attempts to show the fallacy of the common doctrine, but not we think with much success. The truth is, that the inquiry is one of great difficulty, because there are always so many

other and more powerful principles operating on the moral character, rendering it almost impossible to detect the influence of a cause acknowledged on all hands to be comparatively feeble. Dr. Gerard's arguments on this subject are, that most wrong passions may be traced up to some perversion of taste, which produces them by leading us to misapprehend their objects; that a refined taste weakens the disposition to sensual delights; that the exercise of taste begets serenity and satisfaction, a state of mind favourable to benevolence and virtue; that the acuteness of the moral sense is increased by it; that although taste and the moral sense are distinct powers, yet many actions and affections are fitted to gratify both, and that thus there is a double impulse to virtuous conduct. "In order," he observes, "to give the foregoing observations their full weight, it is necessary to remember, that many different causes concur in forming the characters of men. Taste is but one of these causes; and not one of the most powerful. It is not therefore to be

expected, that the character should be, in every instance, perfectly analogous to the taste. Other causes may counteract the influence of this principle, and render the turn of the passions dissimilar to its structure. On this account examples of a good taste, joined with gross passions, or a vicious character, are far from being sufficient to prove, that taste has no connection with morals."

"Taste and elegance," says Burke, "though they are reckoned only among the smaller and secondary morals, yet are of no mean importance in the regulation of life. A moral taste is not of force to turn vice into virtue; but it recommends virtue with something like the blandishments of pleasure; and it infinitely abates the evils of vice."

Lord Shaftesbury has some remarks of a similar tendency, in his Inquiry concerning Virtue. "The admiration and love of order, harmony, and proportion, in whatever kind," he observes, "is naturally improving to the temper, advantageous to social affection, and highly assist-

ant to virtue, which is itself no other than the love of order and beauty in society. In the meanest subjects of the world, the appearance of order gains upon the mind, and draws the affection towards it. But if the order of the world itself appears just and beautiful, the admiration and esteem of order must run higher, and the elegant passion or love of beauty, which is so advantageous to virtue, must be the more improved by its exercise in so ample and magnificent a subject."

We shall add to these the authority of Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his Discourse at the opening of the Royal Academy, Oct. 16, 1780. He considers, that when, in the progress of society, a number of men are relieved from the necessity of an attention to their own wants, it becomes of importance, that their minds should be raised to higher pursuits than the mere gratification of the senses. He thinks, therefore, that refinement of taste, "if it does not lead directly to purity of manners, obviates at least their greatest depravation, by disentangling

the mind from appetite, and conducting the thoughts through successive stages of excellence, till that contemplation of universal rectitude and harmony, which began by taste, may, as it is exalted and refined, conclude in virtue."

QUESTION LXVI.

HAVE EXHIBITIONS OF FICTITIOUS DISTRESS A GOOD OR BAD EFFECT ON THE MORAL CHARACTER?

"Let us reflect a little," says an able writer, "upon the moral tendency of such representations: much has been said in favour of them, and they are generally thought to improve the tender and humane feelings; but this, I own, appears to me very dubious. That they exercise sensibility is true, but sensibility does not increase with exercise. By the constitution of our frame, our habits increase, our emotions decrease, by repeated acts, and thus a wide provision is made, that, as our compassion grows weaker, its place should be supplied by habitual benevolence. But in these writings our sensibility is strongly called forth,

without any possibility of exerting itself in virtuous action; and those emotions, which we shall never feel again with equal force, are wasted without advantage. Nothing is more dangerous than to let virtuous impressions of any kind pass through the mind without producing their proper effect. The awakenings of remorse, virtuous shame and indignation, the glow of moral approbation, if they do not lead to action, grow less and less vivid every time they recur, till at length the mind grows absolutely callous. The being affected with a pathetic story is undoubtedly a sign of an amiable disposition, but perhaps no means of increasing it. On the contrary, young people, by a course of this kind of reading, often acquire something of that apathy and indifference which the experience of real life would have given them, without its advantages.

"Another reason why plays and romances do not improve our humanity is, that they lead us to require a certain elegance of manners, and delicacy of virtue, which is not often found with poverty, ignorance, and meanness. The

objects of pity in romance are as different from those in real life, as our husbandmen from the shepherds of Arcadia; and a girl, who will sit weeping the whole night at the delicate distresses of a Lady Charlotte, or Lady Julia, shall be little moved by the complaint of her neighbour, who, in a homely phrase and vulgar accent, laments to her, that she is not able to get bread for her family." Aikin's Miscellaneous Pieces.

Dugald Stewart has a train of remarkably similar observations in his Philosophy of the Human Mind, chap. vii, sect. v. Both these authors seem to have founded their remarks on a passage in Butler's Analogy, part i, chap. v. The reader will not be displeased at being enabled to compare the preceding extract with the following from Stewart.

"From these reasonings it appears, that an habitual attention to exhibitions of fictitious distress is in every view calculated to check our moral improvement. It diminishes that uneasiness which we feel at the sight of distress, and which prompts us to relieve it. It

strengthens that disgust which the loathsome concomitants of distress excite in the mind, and which prompts us to avoid the sight of misery; while, at the same time, it has no tendency to confirm those habits of active beneficence, without which the best dispositions are useless. I would not, however, be understood to disapprove entirely of fictitious narratives, or of pathetic compositions. I only mean to insinuate, that a taste for them may be carried too far; that the sensibility, which terminates in imagination, is but a refined and selfish luxury; and that nothing can effectually advance our moral improvement, but an attention to the active duties which belong to our stations."

QUESTION LXVII.

IS AN OBSERVANCE OF WHAT IS CALLED POETICAL JUSTICE, IN FICTITIOUS WRITINGS, REQUIRED BY GOOD TASTE AND GOOD SENSE?

THE renowned critic Dennis was a strenuous champion for the strict observance of poetical justice. In his remarks on Addison's tragedy, he adduces the following arguments in its favour:—

"'Tis certainly," says he, "the duty of every tragic poet, by the exact distribution of poetical justice, to imitate the Divine dispensation, and to inculcate a particular Providence. 'Tis true, indeed, upon the stage of the world the wicked sometimes prosper, and the guiltless suffer. But that is permitted by the Governor of the world, to show, from the

attribute of his infinite justice, that there is a compensation in futurity, to prove the immortality of the human soul, and the certainty of future rewards and punishments. But the poetical persons in tragedy exist no longer than the reading or the representation; the whole extent of their entity is circumscribed by these; and, therefore, during that reading or representation, according to their merits or demerits, they must be punished or rewarded. If this is not done, there is no impartial distribution of poetical justice, no instructive lecture of a particular Providence, and no imitation of the Divine dispensation."

In this reasoning, a close examination might probably detect some sophistry. Is it not a wild attempt to comprehend the "compensation of futurity" in the limits of a dramatic action? Is it not a much closer imitation of the Divine dispensation, to exhibit life as it actually presents itself in the world; to show the segment of the circle of the grand system just as it is, incomplete and unfinished, than to bend it by violence till the ends meet? Is it

true, that the whole entity of poetical persons in tragedy is circumscribed by the reading or representation? Is there no reference to futurity, as in real life? In estimating the consequences of good or bad actions, represented on the stage, are we in truth bound down merely to what is set before us? Do we, indeed, conclude, that we see the whole career of the characters, the whole range of their existence?

QUESTION LXVIII.

IS THE MODERN DRAMA BENEFITED OR INJURED BY AN OBSERVANCE OF THE UNITIES OF TIME AND PLACE?

SOME excellent observations, in defence of Shakespeare's neglect of these unities, will be found in Dr. Johnson's admirable preface to our great bard's dramas. Lord Kames ranges himself on the same side of the question, in his Elements of Criticism. It is indeed pretty generally acknowledged, that an adherence to these rules not only confines and cramps a writer's powers, but by compelling him to crowd into a few hours, and into one place, such a variety of incidents, situations, and dialogues, as the nature of dramatic composition requires, produces an opposite effect to what

is intended, and contributes much more to impair the naturalness and probability of the plot, than placing an interval of a dozen years between the acts, and transporting the scene from London to Calcutta. A good exemplification of this remark may be found in Addison's tragedy of Cato, in which the time is a single day, and the place is throughout the same. The whole action passes in the hall of Cato's house, and hence the poet falls into numerous inconsistencies by making it the scene of events, which it is highly unnatural should take place there. The critic Dennis seized upon these inconsistencies, and exposed them with great acuteness and severity. "Treason," says he, "is not the only thing, that is carried on in this hall: that, and love, and philosophy, take their turns in it, without any manner of necessity or probability occasioned by the action, and as regularly, without interrupting one another, as if there were a triple league between them, and a mutual agreement, that each should give place to and make way for

the other, in a due and orderly succession." He subsequently gives his opinion with regard to an observance of the unity of place by modern writers. "I do not remember," he says, "that Aristotle has said any thing expressly concerning the unity of place. 'Tis true, implicitly he has said enough in the rules, which he has laid down for the chorus. For, by making the chorus an essential part of tragedy, and by bringing it on the stage immediately after the opening of the scene, and retaining it there till the very catastrophe, he has so determined and fixed the place of action, that it was impossible for an author on the Grecian stage to break through that unity. I am of opinion, that if a modern tragic poet can preserve the unity of place, without destroying the probability of the incidents, 'tis always best for him to do it; because by the preservation of that unity, as we have taken notice above, he adds grace, and clearness, and comeliness to the representation. But since there are no express rules about it, and we are under no

compulsion to keep it, since we have no chorus as the Grecian poet had; if it cannot be preserved, without rendering the greater part of the incidents unreasonable and absurd, and perhaps sometimes monstrous, 'tis certainly better to break it."

We are told by Mr. Hazlitt, in his Lectures on the English comic writers, that "Farquhar's Letters, prefixed to the collection of his plays, contain, among other things, an admirable exposition of the futility of the dramatic unities of time and place. This criticism," he adds, "preceded Dennis's remarks on that subject, in his Strictures on Mr. Addison's Cato: and completely anticipates all that Dr. Johnson has urged so unanswerably on the subject, in his preface to Shakespeare."

There is one high authority in our days on the opposite side of the question, we mean Lord Byron. In his preface to Sardanapalus and the Two Foscari, he says, "the author has in one instance attempted to preserve, and in the other to approach the 'unities;' con-

ceiving, that with any very distant departure from them, there may be poetry, but can be no drama. He is aware of the unpopularity of this notion in present English literature; but it is not a system of his own, being merely an opinion, which, not very long ago, was the law of literature throughout the world, and is still so in the more civilized parts of it."

QUESTION LXIX.

IS POPE TO BE CONSIDERED AS A POET OF THE FIRST RANK?

THE claims of Pope to a station amongst our first poets have been warmly contested. It has been too much the fashion in the present day to disparage his merits, and to represent him as little better than a skilful versifier, as a moralist and man of wit, whose poetry does not rise greatly above elegant prose. He has, however, had the good fortune to meet with a champion of first-rate prowess, himself the finest poet of the age.

"The attempt," says Lord Byron, "of the poetical populace of the present day to obtain an ostracism against Pope, is as easily accounted for as the Athenians' shell against Aristides; they are tired of hearing him al-

ways called 'the Just.' They are also fighting for life; for if he maintains his station, they will reach their own, by falling. They have raised a mosque by the side of a Grecian temple of the purest architecture; and more barbarous than the barbarians from whose practice I have borrowed the figure, they are not content with their own grotesque edifice, unless they destroy the prior and purely beautiful fabric, which preceded, and which shames them and theirs for ever and ever." "There can be no worse sign for the taste of the time than the depreciation of Pope. It would be better to receive for proof Mr. Cobbett's rough, but strong attack upon Shakespeare and Milton, than to allow this smooth and 'candid' undermining of the reputation of the most *perfect* of our poets, and the purest of our moralists. Of his power in the passions, in description, in the mock heroic, I leave to others to descant. I take him on his strong ground, as an *ethical* poet: in the former none excel; in the mock heroic and the ethical none equal him; and in my mind the latter is

the highest of all poetry, because it does that in *verse*, which the greatest of men have wished to accomplish in prose."—"I shall not presume to say, that Pope is as high a poet as Shakespeare and Milton, though his enemy, Warton, places him immediately under them. I would no more say this, than I would assert in the mosque (once Saint Sophia's), that Socrates was a greater man than Mahomet. But if I say, that he is very near them, it is no more than has been asserted of Burns, who is supposed

'To rival all but Shakespeare's name below."

"He (Pope) is the moral poet of all civilization; and as such, let us hope, that he will one day be the national poet of mankind. He is the only poet, that never shocks; the only poet whose *faultlessness* has been made his reproach. Cast your eye over his productions; consider their extent, and contemplate their variety; pastoral, passion, mock-heroic, translation, satire, ethics; all excellent, and often perfect. If his great charm be *melody*,

how comes it, that foreigners adore him even in their diluted translations?" Lord Byron's Letter on the Rev. W. L. Bowles's Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope. See also Bowles's Edition of Pope's Works; Campbell's Specimens of the British Poets, vol. i; Warton's Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope; Bowles's Letters to Lord Byron in reply; and several pamphlets on the controversy, in the Pamphleteer.

QUESTION LXX.

ARE WE JUSTIFIED IN PURSUING THOSE DIVERSIONS, WHICH ARISE FROM THE INFLICTION OF PAIN AND DEATH ON THE LOWER ANIMALS?

It is a remarkable part of the constitution of man, that with all his boasted sensibility he has a very weak sympathy with the brute creation. In this respect the *animal* part of his nature decidedly predominates: he is little different from the lion that prowls in the desart, or the shark that ranges the ocean. There is more truth than poetry in the lines of Cowper,

> "To make him sport,
> To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
> Or his base gluttony, are causes good
> And just in his account, why bird and beast
> Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed
> With blood of their inhabitants impaled."

It is agreed, however, on all hands, that he is justified in taking away the lives of inferior animals for useful purposes. Even the amiable and sensitive poet just quoted allows, that

> "If man's convenience, health,
> Or safety interfere, his rights and claims
> Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs."

The question is, whether he is justified in the same course of action for mere amusement? "What name should we bestow," exclaims Soame Jenyns, in his Disquisition on Cruelty to Inferior Animals, "what name should we bestow on a superior being, whose whole endeavours were employed, and whose whole pleasure consisted, in terrifying, ensnaring, tormenting, and destroying mankind; whose superior faculties were employed in fomenting animosities amongst them, in contriving engines of destruction, and inciting them to use them in maiming and murdering each other; whose power over them was employed in assisting the rapacious, deceiving the simple, and oppressing the innocent; who,

without provocation or advantage, should continue from day to day, void of all pity and remorse, thus to torment mankind for diversion, and at the same time endeavour with the utmost care to preserve their lives, and to propagate their species, in order to increase the number of victims devoted to his malevolence, and be delighted in proportion to the miseries which he occasioned? I say, what name detestable enough could we find for such a being? Yet, if we impartially consider the case, and our intermediate situation, we must acknowledge, that, with regard to inferior animals, just such a being is a sportsman."

In the first volume of the Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, there is an ingenious defence of these amusements, in an Essay on the Diversions of Hunting, Shooting, Fishing, &c., considered as compatible with Humanity. The writer justifies them principally on the ground, that they furnish those stimulating motives to exercise, which are necessary to the health and enjoyment of man, and that they do not materially diminish the

happiness of the brute animals themselves. He urges one argument, which, as it is often employed, deserves to be closely examined by every one, who turns his reflections upon this subject: As Nature, with a liberal but not lavish hand, has bestowed on her offspring those powers and propensities only, which their own necessities, or the general order and economy of the system require; the gifts of scent to the hound, swiftness to the greyhound, and sagacity to the pointer, denote the use, which she intended man to make of these animals; and, therefore, the diversions in question are justifiable, as fulfilling the intentions of Nature herself. We leave this argument to the sagacity of our readers.

QUESTION LXXI.

ARE THERE ANY SOLID GROUNDS FOR BELIEVING IN THE REALITY OF SPECTRAL APPEARANCES?

Dr. Johnson's celebrated argument on this subject, in Rasselas, it is almost superfluous to quote:—

"That the dead are seen no more, said Imlac, I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages and all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which perhaps prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth. Those, that never heard of one another, would not have agreed in a tale, which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is

doubted by single cavillers can very little weaken the general evidence; and some, who deny it with their tongues, confess it by their fears."

Of this reasoning the reader will find an examination in one of Dr. Aikin's Letters to his Son. See letter xxv, vol. i. He may also consult Dr. Beattie's Moral and Critical Dissertations, p. 89 et seq.

An ingenious work on this subject was published some years ago, by Dr. Ferriar, under the title of An Essay towards a Theory of Apparitions. The leading features of his theory may be gathered from the following extracts.

"I shall begin this discussion," says the Doctor, "by admitting, as an undeniable fact, that the forms of dead or absent persons have been seen, and their voices have been heard, by witnesses, whose testimony is entitled to belief. It would be an endless task to ransack the pages of antiquity for instances to this kind. The apparition of the Genius to Brutus, and of the Fury to Dion, cannot be doubted. We may be allowed, however, to inquire,

whether the improved state of physiology affords any glimpse of light on this subject, and whether such extraordinary and terrific impressions cannot be explained from the known laws of the animal economy, independent of supernatural causes, in the examples furnished by profane history. It is well known, that, in certain diseases of the brain, such as delirium and insanity, spectral delusions take place, even during the space of many days. But it has not been generally observed, that a partial affection of the brain may exist, which renders the patient liable to such imaginary impressions, either of sight or sound, without disordering his judgment or memory. From this peculiar condition of the sensorium, I conceive, that the best supported stories of apparitions may be completely accounted for."

At the conclusion of his essay, he says, "I have thus presented to the reader those facts, which have afforded, to my own mind, a satisfactory explanation of such relations of spectral appearances, as cannot be refused credit, without removing all the limits and supports of

human testimony. To disqualify the senses, or the veracity of those who witness unusual appearances, is the utmost tyranny of prejudice. Yet who, till within the last fifteen years, would have dared to assert that stones fell from the clouds? Livy had regularly recorded such events, and was ridiculed for supplying those most curious facts, which must otherwise have been lost to natural history. In like manner, I conceive that the unaffected accounts of spectral visions should engage the attention of the philosopher as well as of the physician. Instead of regarding these stories with the horror of the vulgar, or the disdain of the sceptic, we should examine them accurately, and should ascertain their exact relation to the state of the brain and of the external senses. The terror of nocturnal illusions would thus be dissipated, to the infinite relief of many wretched creatures; and the appearance of a ghost would be regarded in its true light, as a symptom of bodily distemper, and of little more consequence than the head-ach and shivering attending a common catarrh."

QUESTION LXXII.

ARE THERE ANY CONSIDERATIONS, WHICH CAN JUSTIFY THE PRACTICE OF DUELLING?

"It is astonishing," says Dr. Franklin, "that the murderous practice of duelling should continue so long in vogue. Formerly, when duels were used to determine law-suits, from an opinion, that Providence would in every instance favour truth and right with victory, they were excusable. At present, they decide nothing. A man says something, which another tells him is a lie. They fight, but whichever is killed, the point in dispute remains unsettled." Private Correspondence, vol. i, p. 155.

After all that can be said against the practice, however, it is not an unqualified evil, but

attended with some good consequences. It prevents a number of offensive actions, which the law has neglected to provide against, and keeps up a certain degree of decorum and forbearance in the intercourse of society. According to Bentham, who treats the subject of duels at some length in his chapter on "Satisfaction Honoraire," the public sentiment, which permits this practice, is in the right, and the blame must be thrown on the laws, for having left the affair of personal insults in a state of anarchy, that compels recourse to this singular and unfortunate expedient; for having opposed it when there was no other remedy for wounded Honour; and for having attempted to put a stop to it by inefficacious and disproportionate means. He then proceeds to point out by what methods it might be superseded.

The following extract from the Edinburgh Review contains a remark, which may be thought entitled to some consideration in estimating the advantages and disadvantages of the practice in question.

"A great deal of the spirit and the polish,

by which the higher ranks are distinguished, is derived, we are persuaded, from the importance they ascribe to things, which law has not yet been able to subdue to her authority; to the practice of duelling, and of proscription from good society, for notorious violations of its sanctions. If there were a court, in which a gentleman could seek for reparation for his wounded honour, or from which he could dispatch an officer to recover satisfaction for his affronts, there would soon be a pretty visible falling off, we fear, in the dignity and refinement of our present manners. It is very remarkable, accordingly, that there is least delicacy and politeness, in the commonalty of those nations where there is the best police, and the most ready access to the law: in Holland, for example, and America, and in some parts of Great Britain." Edinburgh Review, vol. xviii, p. 487.

It may be remarked, by the way, that the example of America is rather unfortunately selected, as there is, to say the least, quite as much duelling there, in proportion to the po-

pulation, as in England: and to attribute the supposed want of delicacy and politeness in the people to a good police and a ready access to the law, is to overlook causes of a thousand times more efficiency, and far more likely to be the real agents in the production of such an effect.

Lord Kames has adverted to the present question in his Sketches of Man. His lordship condemns the practice of duelling in his text, and defends it in a note. He even recommends, that it should be regularly licensed by government. The whole note is worth perusal. See the sketch, entitled, On Manners.

We shall conclude these citations by a conversation, detailed by Boswell, in his Life of Johnson. If it throw no light on the subject, it will at all events amuse the reader.

"I started the question," says Boswell, "whether duelling was consistent with moral duty. The brave old General (Oglethorpe) fired at this, and said, with a lofty air, Undoubtedly a man has a right to defend his honour.

"GOLDSMITH (turning to me). I ask you first, Sir, what you would do if you were affronted? I answered, I should think it necessary to fight. Why then (replied Goldsmith), that solves the question.

"JOHNSON. No, Sir, it does not solve the question. It does not follow, that what a man would do is therefore right.

"I said, I wished to have it settled, whether duelling was contrary to the laws of Christianity. Johnson immediately entered on the subject, and treated it in a masterly manner; and so far as I have been able to recollect, his thoughts were these: Sir, as men become in a high degree refined, various causes of offence arise; which are considered to be of such importance, that life must be staked to atone for them, though in reality they are not so. A body that has received a very fine polish may be easily hurt. Before men arrive at this artificial refinement, if one tells his neighbour he lies, his neighbour tells him he lies; if one gives his neighbour a blow, his neighbour gives him a blow: but in a state of

highly polished society, an affront is held to be a serious injury. It must, therefore, be resented, or rather a duel must be fought upon it; as men have agreed to banish from their society one who puts up with an affront without fighting a duel. Now, Sir, it is never unlawful to fight in self-defence. He, then, who fights a duel, does not fight from passion against his antagonist, but out of self-defence; to avert the stigma of the world, and to prevent himself from being driven out of society. I could wish that there was not that superfluity of refinement; but while such notions prevail, no doubt a man may lawfully fight a duel." Vol. i, p. 372, quarto edition.

The only professed treatise on this subject, which we have met with, is entitled, Reflections on Duelling, by Rowland Ingram, B. D. Mr. Ingram tries the practice by several *criteria*, by the laws of the land, by the principles of Christianity, of morality, and of common sense, and finds it repugnant to them all. In the course of his remarks he mentions two treatises on the subject, both in his opinion

conclusive, one by Dr. Richard Key, and the other by Mr. Moore. It is but justice to add, that Mr. Ingram's work displays considerable force of reasoning and energy of style. For an ingenious account of the origin of the modern *point of honour*, the reader is referred to Montesquieu, Spirit of Laws, book xxviii, chap. xx.

QUESTION LXXIII.

DO THE ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF CHARACTER, WHICH MANIFEST THEMSELVES IN EARLY LIFE, EVER UNDERGO A MATERIAL ALTERATION?

THAT there are a great number of striking changes in the characters of men, every body must know from his own experience; and it is equally true, that there are certain qualities in every man's character, which appear never to leave him. Perhaps when important changes occur they are alterations in appearance more than reality. A man may act in the most contrary ways from precisely the same properties of mind, operated upon by different circumstances. He may also, under the influence of new motives, conceal or restrain the manifestation of qualities, which he still possesses.

A person of a fickle disposition may be found in the course of a few years engaged in pursuits of a totally opposite nature; he may be at one time running the career of gaiety and dissipation, and at another devoting himself to severe study. Such changes are said to be alterations in character; but they may perhaps be more justly regarded as indications, that the same original qualities still continue. A person, also, coming under the influence of new motives may appear to change: he was once irritable and passionate, he is now mild and forbearing. In most cases such a transformation may be ascribed to concealment, or to the operation of restraints; and when the motives for the concealment or the restraints are gone, the original qualities reappear.

This subject has been treated with considerable acuteness, by a writer, in Baldwin's London Magazine, No. xv, in an Essay on Personal Character. "No one," says he, "ever changes his character from the time he is two years old; nay, I might say, from the

time he is two hours old. We may, with instruction and opportunity, mend our manners, or else alter for the worse; but the character, the internal, original bias, remains always the same, and true to itself to the very last."—"I do not think, with every assistance from reason and circumstances, that the slothful ever becomes active, the coward brave, the headstrong prudent, the fickle steady, the mean generous, the coarse delicate, the ill-tempered amiable, or the knave honest; but that the restraint of necessity and appearances once taken away, they would relapse into their former and real character again. *Cucullus non facit monachum.* Manners, situation, example, fashion, have a prodigious influence on exterior deportment. But do they penetrate much deeper? The thief will not steal by day: but his having this command over himself does not do away his character or calling. The priest cannot indulge in certain irregularities: but unless his pulse beats temperately from the first, he will only be playing a part through life. Again, the soldier cannot shrink from his duty,

in a dastardly manner: but if he has not naturally steady nerves and strong resolution, except in the field of battle, he may be fearful as a woman, though covered with scars and honour."

This is, in fact, the doctrine of Voltaire. "Character," he says, "comes from a Greek word signifying impression and graving: it is what nature has engraven on us; can we then efface it? This is a weighty question. A misshapen nose, cat's eyes, or any deformity in the features may be hidden by a mask; and can I do more with the character, which nature has given me?" "Religion and morality lay a force on the natural temper, but cannot extirpate it."—"Endeavour to rouse the indolent to a constant activity; to freeze the impetuous into apathy; to give a taste for poetry and music to one who has neither taste nor ear; you may as well go about washing the blackamoor white, or giving sight to one born blind. We only improve, polish, and conceal, what nature has put into us: we have nothing of our own putting."

QUESTION LXXIV.

DOES HAPPINESS OR MISERY PREPONDERATE IN HUMAN LIFE?

"From the subject of death," says Boswell, recounting a conversation with Dr. Johnson, "we passed to discourse of life, whether it was, upon the whole, more happy or miserable. Johnson was decidedly for the balance of misery: in confirmation of which I maintained, that no man would choose to lead over again the life which he had experienced. Johnson acceded to that opinion in the strongest terms. This is an inquiry often made, and its being a subject of disquisition is a proof that much misery presses upon human feelings; for those, who are conscious of a felicity of existence, would never hesitate to accept of a repetition of it. I have met with very few who would. I have heard Mr. Burke make use of a very plausible and ingenious argument on this sub-

ject. Every man, said he, would lead his life over again, for every man is willing to go on and take an addition to his life, which, as he grows older, he has no reason to think will be better, or even so good as what has preceded. I imagine, however, the truth is, that there is a deceitful hope, that the next part of life will be free from the pains, and anxieties, and sorrows which we have already felt. We are, for wise purposes, 'condemned to Hope's delusive mine,' as Johnson finely says; and I may also quote the celebrated lines of Dryden, equally philosophical and poetical:—

When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat,
Yet, fooled with hope, men favour the deceit;
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay;
To-morrow's falser than the former day;
Lies worse; and, while it says we shall be blest
With some new joys, cuts off what we possest.
Strange cozenage! None would live past years again;
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;
And from the dregs of life think to receive,
What the first sprightly running could not give*."

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* Aurengzebe.

QUESTION LXXV.

HAVE GOVERNMENTS ANY GREAT POWER OVER THE FORMATION OF NATIONAL CHARACTER?

A DOCTRINE has been lately taught by Robert Owen, of New Lanark, that "any general character, from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may be given to any community, even to the world at large, by the application of proper means; which means are, to a great extent, at the command, and under the control of those who have influence in the affairs of men." See A New View of Society, or Essays on the Formation of the Human Character, a work worthy of greater attention than it has received, abounding with excellent observations and enlightened views, the production of a man of an original

mind and a benevolent heart. Mr. Owen, perhaps, pushes his principles too far: he may be charged with the errors which Lord Bacon denominates *idola specus*, the idols of the cave, when he so confidently extends the application of certain principles, which may operate with precision and success in the confined sphere of a manufactory, to the whole world. His mistakes, too, on some important points of Political Economy, are deep and radical, and surprising in a man of so much general acuteness and reflection.

Mr. Southey seems to entertain similar views of the power of governments over the character of the people. "The ancient legislators," he says, "understood the power of legislation. But no modern government seems to have perceived, that men are as clay in the potter's hands. There are, and always will be, innate and unalterable differences of individual character; but national character is formed by national institutions and circumstances, and is whatever those circumstances may make it—

Japanese or Tupinamban, Algerine or English. Till governments avail themselves of this principle in its full extent, and give it its best direction, the science of policy will be incomplete." Life of Wesley, vol. i, p. 333.

There is no question, that the character of a people is materially affected by the nature of its political institutions: but Mr. Owen's doctrine, as the reader will observe, goes farther, asserting, that the means of imparting any character to the community are in a great measure at the command of the existing rulers—a proposition by no means equally evident. The character of a people is, in truth, not the effect of contemporary institutions merely, but of a long chain of causes, which have been at work for ages; and this character, so produced, is itself one great agent in limiting the power of a governor over it. His whole measures, to be of any efficacy, must have respect to prevailing habits, customs, prejudices, mental qualities, and modes of thinking; and it may be doubted, whether he can do more than direct

movements which are already begun, and clear the way for a progress which is sure to take place.

In the instances where great effects have been produced by the power of the living legislator, the people have been few in number, and thus easily brought and retained within the circle of his measures. An extensive empire is another thing. The invention of printing, too, by letting loose upon society the collective intelligence of thinking minds, has had a remarkable tendency to narrow the influence of governors over the character of their subjects. A grand moral agent has been found in the PRESS, to which even the most powerful ruler must often bend.

Montesquieu, speaking of the institutions of Lycurgus, of the Cretans, of the Jesuits in Paraguay, and others, remarks, that such institutions "cannot take place but in a small state, in which there is a possibility of a general education, and of training up the body of a people like a single family. The laws

of Minos, of Lycurgus, and of Plato," he continues, " suppose a particular attention and care, which the citizens ought to have over one another's conduct. But an attention of this kind cannot be expected in the confusion and multitude of affairs in which a large nation is entangled." Spirit of Laws, book iv, chap. vii.

QUESTION LXXVI.

IS IT TRUE, THAT THE INHABITANTS OF MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS ARE MORE REMARKABLE FOR ATTACHMENT TO THEIR COUNTRY THAN THOSE OF PLAINS?

EVERY body will recollect those fine verses of Goldsmith, in which he describes the Swiss:—

" Thus every good his native wilds impart,
Imprints the patriot passion on his heart;
And e'en those ills, that round his mansion rise,
Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.
Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;
And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
So the loud torrent, and the whirlwind's roar,
But bind him to his native mountains more."

The doctrine, which is here so poetically

stated, has been expanded by other writers into a regular theory.

"In mountainous countries," says Dr. Currie, speaking of attachment to the land of one's birth, "it is generally found more active than in plains, because there the necessaries of life require a closer union of the inhabitants; and more especially because in such countries, though less populous than plains, the inhabitants, instead of being scattered equally over the whole, are usually divided into small communities on the sides of their separate vallies, and on the banks of their respective streams; situations well calculated to call forth and to concentrate the social affections, amidst scenery that acts most powerfully on the sight, and makes a lasting impression on the memory. It may also be remarked, that mountainous countries are often peculiarly calculated to nourish sentiments of national pride and independence, from the influence of history on the affections of the mind. In such countries, from their natural strength, inferior nations have maintained their independence against

their more powerful neighbours; and valour, in all ages, has made its most successful efforts against oppression. Such countries present the fields of battle, where the tide of invasion was rolled back, and where the ashes of those rest, who have died in defence of their nation."

QUESTION LXXVII.

IS EMULATION A PRINCIPLE, WHICH OUGHT TO BE EMPLOYED IN THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG?

MUCH difference of opinion has existed on this subject, nor is there yet complete unanimity.

"Emulation," says Dr. Beattie, "when without any mixture of malice or envy, is a noble principle of action, and a powerful excitement to the acquisition of excellence. Prudent parents and teachers are at pains to cherish it in young persons; and find, that, when properly directed, it has better effects than the fear of punishment, or the hope of reward. There are writers, who, viewing human nature in an unfavourable light, have thought fit to affirm, that emulation cannot be without envy, and that therefore it is dangerous to encourage it in

schools or families. But this is a mistake. These two passions differ as widely as candour differs from cunning, or a reasonable regard to ourselves from ill-will to our neighbour. Emulation wishes to raise itself without pulling others down, that is, without doing or wishing them any injury; and no principle of action is in itself more commendable, or more useful to others, as an example to rouse them to honest industry: there is great generosity in such emulation; and the man, who exerts himself in it, is making continual advances in virtue, because he is every moment acquiring more and more the command of his own spirit."

Mr. Southey, in his Life of Kirke White, takes a different view of the subject. "In schools," says he, "and in all practical systems of education, emulation is made the main spring; as if there were not enough of the leaven of disquietude in our natures, without inoculating it with this dilutement, this *vaccine virus* of envy."

QUESTION LXXVIII.

IS THERE IN NATURE A REGULAR GRADATION, OR WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED A CHAIN OF BEINGS?

THIS has been a favourite hypothesis with many, and has been ridiculed by others.

"The farther we inquire," says Soame Jenyns, "into the works of our great Creator, the more evident marks we shall discover of his infinite wisdom and power; and perhaps in none more remarkable, than in that wonderful chain of beings, with which this terrestrial globe is furnished; rising above each other, from the senseless clod to the brighest genius of human kind, in which, though the chain itself is sufficiently visible, the links, which compose it, are so minute, and so finely wrought, that they are quite imperceptible to our eyes." "He

has not formed this necessary and beautiful subordination by placing beings of quite different natures above each other, but by granting some additional quality to each superior order, in conjunction with all those possessed by their inferiors; so that, though they rise above each other in excellence, by means of these additional qualities, one mode of existence is common to them all, without which they never could have coalesced in one uniform and regular system. Thus, for instance, in plants we find all the qualities of mere matter, the only order below them, solidity, extension, and gravity, with the addition of vegetation; in animals, all the properties of matter, together with the vegetation of plants, to which is added life and instinct; and in man we find all the properties of matter, the vegetation of plants, the life and instinct of animals, to all which is superadded reason." Disquisitions on several Subjects, by Soame Jenyns, disquisition i, On the Chain of Universal Being.

Amongst the opponents of this doctrine is Voltaire. "On my first reading Plato," says

he, "I was charmed with his gradation of beings, rising from the slightest atom to the Supreme Essence. Such a scale struck me with admiration; but, on a closer survey of it, this august phantom disappeared, as formerly ghosts used to hie away at the crowing of the cock. Fancy is at first ravished, in beholding the imperceptible ascent from senseless matter to organized bodies, from plants to zoophytes, from these to men, from men to genii, from these ethereal genii to immaterial essence; and, lastly, numberless different orders of these essences, ascending through a succession of increasing beauties and perfections, to God himself." He then argues against this supposed chain of being, 1, that infinitude lies between God and the most perfect angelic being; 2, that some species of animals and plants have been extinguished, in which case where is the chain? 3, that there is a manifest chasm between the monkey and man: and he adduces some other considerations of no great weight. Dr. Beattie takes the same side of the question, in his Dissertation on Memory and Imagina-

tion; but unlike Voltaire, who finds the doctrine of a gradation of beings in Plato, he terms it one of the conceits of modern philosophy. Their arguments are, however, much the same.

In Smellie's Philosophy of Natural History, there is a chapter on the subject, entitled, Of the Progressive Scale or Chain of Beings in the Universe, in which the author contends for the existence of a regular gradation of beings. With regard to the supposed chasm between man and the inferior animals, he says, "that in descending the scale of animation [from the human race] the next step, it is humiliating to remark, is very short. Man, in his lowest condition, is evidently linked, both in the form of his body and the capacity of his mind, to the large and small ouran-outangs." Chap. xxii.

On reviewing the controversy, one is almost irresistibly tempted to ask, is not the whole a dispute as to the propriety of a metaphorical expression?

QUESTION LXXIX.

IS A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDED BY THE GREATER NUMBER OF ADVANTAGES?

This question may be divided into two, or may be considered separately with regard to boys and girls; for the arguments, which went to prove the expediency of public education for boys, might have no application to the case of females. The reader will find some excellent remarks on the subject in Edgeworths' Practical Education. The authors of that work certainly adduce some formidable objections against public schools: amongst other things, they allege, that too much time is sacrificed to the study of the learned languages; that sufficient attention is not paid to the improvement of the general powers, and to the formation of

the moral character; that a schoolmaster is not able to attend with the requisite care to the tempers and habits of each of his pupils; and that parents during the holidays are not sufficiently solicitous to co-operate with the views of the schoolmaster. Some of these objections are evidently directed only against the errors, the removable defects of public seminaries; while others attack the system itself, or its inherent properties. This distinction it may be well to keep in view, since, if we contrast a perfect system of private education with a defective public institution, we shall naturally decide for the former. But if private education were generally adopted, there is no doubt that many errors would be committed; perhaps on the whole the result would be worse than under the general adoption of public education. It is only under a happy combination of circumstances that the former is practicable. There are some professions too, it may be remarked, which seem to demand the preparation of a public school, such as the naval and military.

The authors of Practical Education, after allowing due weight to most of these considerations, conclude by saying, "we hope that we have shown ourselves the friends of the public preceptor, that we have pointed out the practicable means of improving public institutions by parental care and parental cooperation. But until such a meliorating plan shall actually have been carried into effect, we cannot hesitate to assert, that even when the abilities of the parent are inferior to those of the public preceptor, the means of ensuring success preponderate in favour of private education. A father, who has time, talents, and temper, to educate his family, is certainly the best possible preceptor, and his reward will be the highest degree of domestic felicity. If from his situation he is obliged to forego this reward, he may select some man of literature, sense, and integrity, to whom he can confide his children." Chap. xix.

QUESTION LXXX.

ARE LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC PURSUITS SUITED TO THE FEMALE CHARACTER?

"SENTIMENT and ridicule," say the Edgeworths, in their work on Practical Education, "have conspired to represent reason, knowledge, and science, as unsuitable or dangerous to women; yet, at the same time, wit, and superficial acquirements in literature, have been the object of admiration in society: so that this dangerous inference has been drawn, almost without our perceiving its fallacy, that superficial knowledge is more desirable in women than accurate knowledge.

"This principle must lead to innumerable errors; it must produce continual contradictions in the course of education: instead of making women more reasonable, and less pre-

suming, it will render them at once arrogant and ignorant; full of pretensions, incapable of application, and unfit to hear themselves convinced. Whatever young women learn, let them be taught accurately; let them know ever so little apparently, they will know much if they have learnt that little *well*. A girl, who runs through a course of natural history, hears something about chemistry, has been taught something of botany, and who knows but just enough of these to make her fancy that she is well informed, is in a miserable situation, in danger of becoming ridiculous, and insupportably tiresome to men of sense and science. But let a woman know any one thing completely, and she will have sufficient understanding to learn more, and to apply what she has been taught so as to interest men of generosity and genius in her favour. The knowledge of the general principles of any science is very different from superficial knowledge of the science; perhaps, from not attending to this distinction, or from not understanding it, many have failed in female education."

The sound sense of these remarks will be a sufficient apology for their introduction under the present question, on which they will be thought perhaps to have little direct bearing: yet they point correctly to the source of that prejudice against female talent, which is generally, and often justly entertained. What displeases men in literary or scientific females is the tendency which they have to display petty acquisitions, such as technical terms, scholastic phrases, references to learned authorities, and little particulars not commonly known; in short, the husk of learning. No one objects to that luminous intelligence, which, although the result of diligent cultivation, manifests itself without effort or artifice, and is not encumbered by any indications of the sources whence it is derived, or of the process by which it has been obtained.

There appears to be no circumstance, which ought to exclude females from literary pursuits, but that which also excludes a number of men, namely, the incompatibility of an at-

tention to such pursuits with the duties of their situation in life. As it would be unsuitable to the occupation of an artizan to spend his time over Latin or geometry, so it would be to the domestic cares of the mother of a large family in straitened circumstances. But this, it may be said, is not the question; it is, whether literary and scientific pursuits do not injure those qualities in the female character, from which it derives its charm and lustre, the qualities of modesty, delicacy, sensibility, grace, and elegance? An exclusive or immoderate attention to these studies, would unquestionably produce such an effect; but only in the same way, it may be contended, as the like immoderate attention to them would impair the masculine qualities of courage, presence of mind, decision, and practical skill. The opinion of the authors, whom we have already quoted, is: "that it will tend to the happiness of society in general, that women should have their understandings cultivated and enlarged as much as possible; that the happiness

of domestic life, the virtues and the powers of pleasing in the female sex, the yet more desirable power of attaching those worthy of their love and esteem, will be increased by the judicious cultivation of the female understanding, more than by all that modern gallantry or ancient chivalry could devise in favour of the sex." See chap. xx.

QUESTION LXXXI.

ARE ANY OF THE SYSTEMS OF ARTIFICIAL MEMORY CALCULATED TO FACILITATE THE ATTAINMENT, OR ASSIST IN THE RETENTION OF KNOWLEDGE?

A FEW years ago, considerable interest was excited by some lectures on the art of memory, delivered by Professor Von Feinaigle, and by several other persons who followed in his wake. Numbers engaged with enthusiasm in this new study, apparently in the hope of carrying the strong-hold of science by a *coup de main;* but their ardour soon subsided, and the system seems now consigned to that oblivion, which awaits all projects for acquiring knowledge without labour. Had it been even of great service in aiding the memory, there would have still been the insurmountable objection against

it, that it necessarily rendered all knowledge, acquired by its assistance, dependent on whimsical and preposterous associations, entangling every fact, every date, and every principle, with unnatural and absurd images, and thus depraving the taste and vitiating the imagination.

Those, who wish to make themselves acquainted with the nature of the system, may consult a work, published in London, under the title of the New Art of Memory, founded upon the Principles taught by M. Gregor Von Feinaigle. This volume contains, also, a short account of the principal systems of artificial memory which have appeared in different countries and ages; amongst the rest, of Dr. Grey's Memoria Technica. Of all the contrivances to assist the memory, perhaps the last mentioned has the best claims to attention. Dr. Priestley has spoken highly of its utility in the recollection of dates. See his Lectures on History, p. 157. Dr. Carpenter thinks it serviceable in fixing in the mind the leading dates of history, the latitude and longitude of places, the sizes

and distances of the planets, the specific gravity of bodies, &c.; "though we can never," he adds, "recommend the employment of it in science, without a full previous acquaintance with the facts to which it relates, and a frequent explicit reference to them." Principles of Education, p. 87.

In Edgeworth's Practical Education there are the following remarks on the same subject:—

"We agree entirely with Mr. Stewart in his observations upon technical helps to the memory; they are hurtful to the understanding, because they break the general habits of philosophic order in the mind. There is no connection of ideas between the memorial lines, for instance, in Grey's Memoria Technica, the history of the kings or emperors, and the dates that we wish to remember. However, it may be advantageous in education to use such contrivances, to assist our pupils in remembering those technical parts of knowledge, which are sometimes valued above their worth in society. The facts, upon which the principles of any

science are founded, should never be learned by rote in a technical manner. But the names and the dates of a number of kings and emperors, if they must be remembered by children, should be learnt in the manner which may give them the least trouble." P. 563.

QUESTION LXXXII.

ARE GREAT TALENTS FAVOURABLE TO THE HAPPINESS OF THEIR POSSESSOR?

"THAT affluence and power," says Dr. Johnson, "advantages extrinsic and adventitious, and therefore easily separable from those by whom they are possessed, should very often flatter the mind with expectations of felicity which they cannot give, raises no astonishment; it seems rational to hope, that intellectual greatness should produce better effects; that minds, qualified for great attainments, should first endeavour their own benefit; and that they, who are most able to teach others the way to happiness, should with most certainty follow it themselves. But this expectation, however plausible, has been very frequently disappointed. The heroes of literary, as well

as civil history, have been very often no less remarkable for what they have suffered, than for what they have achieved; and volumes have been written only to enumerate the miseries of the learned, and relate their unhappy lives and untimely deaths." Life of Savage.

In discussing this question, learned men are too apt to confine their views to literary talents; but it comprehends talents of all kinds, active or speculative. As much ability may be shown in the management of an estate, as in the composition of a poem; in the conduct of a voyage, as in the delivery of a lecture. We would, therefore, include all kinds of mental pre-eminence, and inquire, whether the possession of intellectual powers, above the general level of humanity, is attended with any superiority of happiness? Perhaps the decision of this question might depend in some measure on our estimate of the pains and pleasures of human life. If existence partakes more of happiness than misery, then that superiority of talents, of which one effect seems to be to augment the sources of both, may be said to

bring an increase of happiness on the whole. But the more direct way of arriving at a satisfactory conclusion, is to compare the peculiar advantages of talent with its peculiar infelicities. That such exist, the least observation is sufficient to evince; and it would be no difficult matter to enumerate them with tolerable completeness, although it might be a delicate task to adjust their respective claims to consideration with the requisite accuracy.

QUESTION LXXXIII.

IS THE DESIRE OF POSTHUMOUS FAME A RATIONAL PRINCIPLE OF ACTION?

> THIS globe pourtray'd the race of learned men
> Still at their books, and turning o'er the page
> Backwards and forwards : oft they snatch the pen,
> As if inspir'd, and in a Thespian rage,
> Then write and blot, as would your ruth engage.
> Why, authors ! all this scrawl and scribbling sore?
> To lose the present, gain the future age,
> Praised to be, when you can hear no more,
> And much enrich'd with fame, when useless wordly store?
>
> CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

The question put by the poet has been frequently asked, and the passion for posthumous reputation has been stigmatized as altogether unworthy of a rational being. "Nulla est omnino gloria," says an ancient moralist, "cum is, cujus ea esse dicitur, non extet om-

nino :" Glory is nothing, when he, to whom it is said to belong, has ceased to exist. In the same strain it is affirmed, by an eminent modern writer, that the desire of posthumous fame, in those who do not believe that there will be any consciousness of it remaining, is one of the most preposterous principles imaginable*. This is an assertion, however, which will be disputed. If we are so constituted by nature as to receive pleasure from the idea, that our names will be held in reverence when we ourselves are nothing but unconscious dust, why should we not make efforts to obtain that pleasure? If we can enjoy the mere prospect, if we can find delight in the bare anticipation, it is a sufficient warrant for taking those steps which are likely to give permanence and stability to our hopes. By performing actions calculated to immortalize our names, we shall be acquiring a perpetual source of gratification; and it matters not that we shall be unconscious of the voice of fame, if our happiness is in-

* Letters from a Father to his Son, by Dr. Aikin, vol ii, p. 164.

creased by the expectation of it. We must take human nature as it is, and we shall find, that reflections, as to the emptiness of posthumous reputation, its actual nullity as regards the individual, will have no more influence in abating our desire for it, than the idea that beauty is a transitory charm in allaying the ardour of passion.

"It has been argued," says an anonymous writer, "that posthumous fame is an unreasonable object of desire, as no man can botain it till he is incapable of enjoying it. To this I shall answer, that he, who has done actions to deserve it, has already attained it in imagination; he feels himself living in the future; he foresees the homage that will attend upon his name. It would be easy to show, that almost every great poet and philosopher has foreseen his own immortality. If it be objected, that this foretaste of fame, being unaccompanied by any homage, must be an airy and unsubstantial pleasure, I shall briefly reply, that it is of the same nature with many others which have always been appreciated. If it is a pleasure to

contribute to the happiness, though without hearing the thanks, of an unknown beggar; if it is a pleasure to be read and admired by distant nations, though they transmit no testimony of their admiration; if it is a pleasure to be loved by persons in England, even when on a voyage across the Atlantic, it may also be a pleasure, and one of the highest degree, to be conscious that we shall obtain the admiration, the blessing, and the love of future generations." Essays and Sketches of Life and Character, attributed to Lord John Russell.

For a vindication of this desire, and an ingenious explanation of its nature, see also Dr. Brown's Lectures on the Human Mind, lecture lxxi.

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