

CHARLES DICKENS.

1812-1870.

SELECTED ADDRESSES DELIVERED ON
VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

[SPOKEN at a public dinner given at Edinburgh, June 25, 1841, presided over by Professor Wilson.]

If I felt your warm and generous welcome less, I should be better able to thank you. If I could have listened as you have listened to the glowing language of your distinguished chairman, and if I could have heard as you heard the "thoughts that breathe and words that burn," which he has uttered, it would have gone hard but I should have caught some portion of his enthusiasm, and kindled at his example. But every word which fell from his lips, and every demonstration of sympathy and approbation with which you received his eloquent expressions, renders me unable to respond to his kindness, and leaves me at last all heart and no lips, yearning to respond as I would do to your cordial greeting—possessing, Heaven knows, the will, and desiring only to find the way.

The way to your good opinion, favour, and support, has been to me very pleasing—a path strewn with flowers and cheered with sunshine. I feel as if I stood amongst old friends, whom I had intimately known and highly valued. I feel as if the deaths of the fictitious creatures, in which you have been kind enough to express an interest, had endeared us to each other as real afflictions deepen friendships in actual life; I feel as if they had been real persons, whose fortunes we had pursued together in inseparable connection, and that I had never known them apart from you.

It is a difficult thing for a man to speak of himself or of his works. But, perhaps, on this occasion I may, without impropriety, venture to say a word on the spirit in which mine were conceived. I felt an earnest and humble desire, and shall do till I die, to increase the stock of harmless cheerfulness. I felt that the world was not utterly to be despised; that it was worthy of living in for many reasons. I was anxious to find, as the professor has said, if I could, in evil things, that soul of goodness which the Creator has put in them. I was anxious to show that virtue may be found in the by-ways of the world, that it is not incompatible with poverty, and even with rags, and to keep steadily through life the motto, expressed in the burning words of your Northern poet:

"The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man's the gold for a' that."

And in following this track, where could I have better assurance that I was right, or where could I have stronger assurance to cheer me on than in your kindness on this to me memorable night?

I am anxious and glad to have an opportunity of saying a word in reference to one incident in which I am happy to know you were interested, and still more happy to know, though it may sound paradoxical, that you were disappointed—I mean the death of the little heroine. When I first conceived the idea of conducting that simple story to its termination, I determined rigidly to adhere to it, and never to forsake the end I had in view. Not untried in the school of affliction, in the death of those we love, I thought what a good thing it would be if in my little work of pleasant amusement I could substitute a garland of fresh flowers for the sculptured horrors which disgrace the tomb. If I have put into my book anything which can fill the young mind with better thoughts of death, or soften the grief of older hearts; if I have written one word which can afford pleasure or consolation to old or young in time of trial, I shall consider it as something achieved—something which I shall be glad to look back upon in after-life. Therefore I kept to my purpose, notwithstanding that towards the conclusion of the story I daily received letters of remonstrance, especially from the ladies. God bless them for their tender mercies! The professor was quite right when he said that I had not reached to an adequate delineation of their virtues; and I fear that I must go on blotting their characters in endeavouring to reach the ideal in my mind. These letters were, however, combined with others from the sterner sex, and some of them were not altogether free from personal invective. But, notwithstanding, I kept to my purpose, and I am happy to know that many of those who at first condemned me are now foremost in their approbation.

If I have made a mistake in detaining you with this little incident, I do not regret having done so; for your kindness has given me such a confidence in you, that the fault is yours and not mine. I come once more to thank you, and here I am in a difficulty again. The distinction you have conferred upon me is one which I never hoped for, and of which I never dared to dream. That it is one which I shall never forget, and that while I live I shall be proud of its remembrance, you must well know. I believe I shall never hear the name of this capital of Scotland without a thrill of gratitude and pleasure. I shall love while I have life her people, her hills,

and her houses, and even the very stones of her streets. And if in the future works which may lie before me you should discern—God grant you may!—a brighter spirit and a clearer wit, I pray you to refer it back to this night, and point to that as a Scottish passage for evermore. I thank you again and again, with the energy of a thousand thanks in each one, and I drink to you with a heart as full as my glass, and far easier emptied, I do assure you.

[Reply to the toast, "Health, happiness, and a hearty welcome to Charles Dickens:" spoken at a dinner given in his honour at Boston, February 1, 1842.]

GENTLEMEN,—If you had given this splendid entertainment to any one else in the whole wide world—if I were to-night to exult in the triumph of my dearest friend—if I stood here upon my defence, to repel any unjust attack—to appeal as a stranger to your generosity and kindness as the freest people on the earth—I could, putting some restraint upon myself, stand among you as self-possessed and unmoved as I should be alone in my own room in England. But when I have the echoes of your cordial greeting ringing in my ears; when I see your kind faces beaming a welcome so warm and earnest as never man had—I feel, it is my nature, so vanquished and subdued, that I have hardly fortitude enough to thank you. If your president, instead of pouring forth that delightful mixture of humour and pathos which you have just heard, had been but a caustic, ill-natured man—if he had only been a dull one—if I could only have doubted or distrusted him or you, I should have had my wits at my fingers' ends, and, using them, could have held you at arm's-length. But you have given me no such opportunity; you take advantage of me in the tenderest point; you give me no chance of playing at company, or holding you at a distance, but flock about me like a host of brothers, and make this place like home. Indeed, gentlemen, indeed, if it be natural and allowable for each of us, on his own hearth, to express his thoughts in the most homely fashion, and to appear in his plainest garb, I have a fair claim upon you to let me do so to-night, for you have made my home an Aladdin's palace. You fold so tenderly within your breasts that common household lamp in which my feeble fire is all enshrined, and at which my flickering torch is lighted up, that straight my household gods take wing, and are transported there. And whereas it is written of that fairy structure that it never moved without two shocks—one when it rose, and one when it settled down—I can say of mine that, however sharp a tug it took to pluck it from its native ground, it struck at once an easy and a deep and lasting root into

this soil; and loved it as its own. I can say more of it, and say with truth, that long before it moved, or had a chance of moving, its master—perhaps from some secret sympathy between its timbers, and a certain stately tree that has its being hereabout, and spreads its broad branches far and wide—dreamed by day and night, for years, of setting foot upon this shore, and breathing this pure air. And, trust me, gentlemen, that, if I had wandered here, unknowing and unknown, I would—if I know my own heart—have come with all my sympathies clustering as richly about this land and people—with all my sense of justice as keenly alive to their high claims on every man who loves God's image—with all my energies as fully bent on judging for myself, and speaking out, and telling in my sphere the truth, as I do now, when you rain down your welcomes on my head.

Our president has alluded to those writings which have been my occupation for some years past; and you have received his allusions in a manner which assures me—if I needed any such assurance—that we are old friends in the spirit, and have been in close communion for a long time.

It is not easy for a man to speak of his own books. I daresay that few persons have been more interested in mine than I, and if it be a general principle in nature that a lover's love is blind, and that a mother's love is blind, I believe it may be said of an author's attachment to the creatures of his own imagination, that it is a perfect model of constancy and devotion, and is the blindest of all. But the objects and purposes I have had in view are very plain and simple, and may be easily told. I have always had, and always shall have, an earnest and true desire to contribute, as far as in me lies, to the common stock of healthful cheerfulness and enjoyment. I have always had, and always shall have, an invincible repugnance to that mole-eyed philosophy which loves the darkness, and winks and scowls in the light. I believe that virtue shows quite as well in rags and patches as she does in purple and fine linen. I believe that she and every beautiful object in external nature, claims some sympathy in the breast of the poorest man who breaks his scanty loaf of daily bread. I believe that she goes barefoot as well as shod. I believe that she dwells rather oftener in alleys and by-ways than she does in courts and palaces, and that it is good, and pleasant, and profitable to track her out, and follow her. I believe that to lay one's hand upon some of those rejected ones whom the world has too long forgotten, and too often misused, and to say to the proudest and most thoughtless: "These creatures have the same elements and capacities of goodness as yourselves, they are moulded in the same form, and made of the same clay; and though ten times worse than you, may, in having retained anything of their

original nature amidst the trials and distresses of their condition, be really ten times better"—I believe that to do this is to pursue a worthy and not useless vocation. Gentlemen, that you think so too, your fervent greeting sufficiently assures me. That this feeling is alive in the old world as well as in the new, no man should know better than I—I, who have found such wide and ready sympathy in my own dear land. That in expressing it, we are but treading in the steps of those great master-spirits who have gone before, we know by reference to all the bright examples in our literature, from Shakespeare downward.

There is one other point connected with the labours (if I may call them so) that you hold in such generous esteem, to which I cannot help advert. I cannot help expressing the delight, the more than happiness it was to me to find so strong an interest awakened on this side of the water, in favour of that little heroine of mine, to whom your president has made allusion, who died in her youth. I had letters about that child, in England, from the dwellers in log-houses among the morasses, and swamps, and densest forests, and deep solitudes of the Far West. Many a sturdy hand, hard with the axe and spade, and browned by the summer's sun, has taken up the pen, and written to me a little history of domestic joy or sorrow, always coupled, I am proud to say, with something of interest in that little tale, or some comfort or happiness derived from it, and my correspondent has always addressed me, not as a writer of books for sale, resident some four or five thousand miles away, but as a friend to whom he might freely impart the joys and sorrows of his own fireside. Many a mother—I could reckon them now by dozens, not by units—has done the like, and has told me how she lost such a child at such a time, and where she lay buried, and how good she was, and how, in this or that respect, she resembles Nell. I do assure you that no circumstance of my life has given me one hundredth part of the gratification I have derived from this source. I was wavering at the time whether or not to wind up my clock,* and come and see this country, and this decided me. I felt as if it were a positive duty, as if I were bound to pack up my clothes, and come and see my friends; and even now I have such an odd sensation in connection with these things, that you have no chance of spoiling me. I feel as though we were agreeing—as indeed we are, if we substitute for fictitious characters the classes from which they are drawn—about third parties, in whom we had a common interest. At every new act of kindness on your part, I say to myself, "That's for Oliver; I should not wonder if that was meant for Smike; I have no doubt that is intended for Nell;" and so I become a much happier, certainly, but a

* "Master Humphrey's Clock."

more sober and retiring man than ever I was before.

Gentlemen, talking of my friends in America brings me back, naturally and of course, to you. Coming back to you, and being thereby reminded of the pleasure we have in store in hearing the gentlemen who sit about me, I arrive by the easiest, though not the shortest course in the world, at the end of what I have to say. But before I sit down, there is one topic on which I am desirous to lay particular stress. It has, or should have, a strong interest for us all, since to its literature every country must look for one great means of refining and improving its people, and one great source of national pride and honour. You have in America great writers—great writers—who will live in all time, and are as familiar to our lips as household words. Deriving (as they all do in a greater or less degree, in their several walks) their inspiration from the stupendous country that gave them birth, they diffuse a better knowledge of it, and a higher love for it, all over the civilised world. I take leave to say, in the presence of some of those gentlemen, that I hope the time is not far distant when they, in America, will receive of right some substantial profit and return in England from their labours; and when we in England shall receive some substantial profit and return in America for ours. Pray do not misunderstand me. Securing to myself from day to day the means of an honourable subsistence, I would rather have the affectionate regard of my fellow-men, than I would have heaps and mines of gold. But the two things do not seem to me incompatible. They cannot be, for nothing good is incompatible with justice; there must be an international arrangement in this respect: England has done her part, and I am confident that the time is not far distant when America will do hers. It becomes the character of a great country; firstly, because it is justice; secondly, because without it you never can have, and keep, a literature of your own.

Gentlemen, I thank you with feelings of gratitude, such as are not often awakened, and can never be expressed. As I understand it to be the pleasant custom here to finish with a toast, I would beg to give you, "America and England," and may they never have any division but the Atlantic between them.

[At Hartford, U.S., February 7, 1842.]

GENTLEMEN,—To say that I thank you for the earnest manner in which you have drunk the toast just now so eloquently proposed to you—to say that I give you back your kind wishes and good feelings with more than compound interest; and that I feel how dumb and powerless the best acknowledgments would be beside

such genial hospitality as yours, is nothing. To say that in this winter season, flowers have sprung up in every footstep's length of the path which has brought me here; that no country ever smiled more pleasantly than yours has smiled on me; and that I have rarely looked upon a brighter summer prospect than that which lies before me now, is nothing.

But it is something to be no stranger in a strange place—to feel, sitting at a board for the first time, the ease and affection of an old guest, and to be at once on such intimate terms with the family as to have a homely, genuine interest in its every member—it is, I say, something to be in this novel and happy frame of mind. And, as it is of your creation, and owes its being to you, I have no reluctance in urging it as a reason why, in addressing you, I should not so much consult the form and fashion of my speech, as I should employ that universal language of the heart, which you, and such as you, best teach, and best can understand. Gentlemen, in that universal language—common to you in America, and to us in England, as that younger mother-tongue, which, by the means of, and through the happy union of our two great countries, shall be spoken ages hence, by land and sea, over the wide surface of the globe—I thank you.

I had occasion to say the other night in Boston, as I have more than once had occasion to remark before, that it is not easy for an author to speak of his own books. If the task be a difficult one at any time, its difficulty, certainly, is not diminished when a frequent recurrence to the same theme has left one nothing new to say. Still, I feel that, in a company like this, and especially after what has been said by the president, that I ought not to pass lightly over those labours of love, which, if they had no other merit, have been the happy means of bringing us together.

It has been often observed, that you cannot judge of an author's personal character from his writings. It may be that you cannot. I think it very likely, for many reasons, that you cannot. But, at least, a reader will rise from the perusal of a book with some defined and tangible idea of the writer's moral creed and broad purposes, if he has any at all; and it is probable enough that he may like to have this idea confirmed from the author's lips, or dissipated by his explanation. Gentlemen, my moral creed—which is a very wide and comprehensive one, and includes all sects and parties—is very easily summed up. I have faith, and I wish to diffuse faith in the existence—yes, of beautiful things, even in those conditions of society, which are so degenerate, degraded, and forlorn, that, at first sight, it would seem as though they could not be described but by a strange and terrible reversal of the words of Scripture, "God said, Let there be light, and there was none." I take it that we are born, and that we hold our sympathies,

hopes, and energies, in trust for the many, and not for the few. That we cannot hold in too strong a light of disgust and contempt, before the view of others, all meanness, falsehood, cruelty, and oppression, of every grade and kind. Above all, that nothing is high, because it is in a high place; and that nothing is low, because it is in a low one. This is the lesson taught us in the great book of nature. This is the lesson which may be read, alike in the bright track of the stars, and in the dusty course of the poorest thing that drags its tiny length upon the ground. This is the lesson ever uppermost in the thoughts of that inspired man, who tells us that there are

"Tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Gentlemen, keeping these objects steadily before me, I am at no loss to refer your favour and your generous hospitality back to the right source. While I know, on the one hand, that if, instead of being what it is, this were a land of tyranny and wrong, I should care very little for your smiles or frowns, so I am sure upon the other, that if, instead of being what I am, I were the greatest genius that ever trod the earth, and had diverted myself for the oppression and degradation of mankind, you would despise and reject me. I hope you will, whenever, through such means, I give you the opportunity. Trust me, that, whenever you give me the like occasion, I will return the compliment with interest.

Gentlemen, as I have no secrets from you, in the spirit of confidence you have engendered between us, and as I have made a kind of compact with myself that I never will, while I remain in America, omit an opportunity of referring to a topic in which I and all others of my class on both sides of the water are equally interested—equally interested, there is no difference between us, I would beg leave to whisper in your ear two words: *International Copyright*. I use them in no sordid sense, believe me, and those who know me best, best know that. For myself, I would rather that my children, coming after me, trudged in the mud, and knew by the general feeling of society that their father was beloved, and had been of some use, than I would have them ride in their carriages, and know by their bankers' books that he was rich. But I do not see, I confess, why one should be obliged to make the choice, or why fame, besides playing that delightful *reveil* for which she is so justly celebrated, should not blow out of her trumpet a few notes of a different kind from those with which she has hitherto contented herself.

It was well observed the other night by a beautiful speaker, whose words went to the heart of every man who heard him, that, if there had existed any law in this respect, Scott might not have sunk beneath the mighty pressure on his brain, but might have lived to

add new creatures of his fancy to the crowd which swarm about you in your summer walks, and gather round your winter evening hearths.

As I listened to his words, there came back, fresh upon me, that touching scene in the great man's life, when he lay upon his couch, surrounded by his family, and listened, for the last time, to the rippling of the river he had so well loved, over its stony bed. I pictured him to myself, faint, wan, dying, crushed both in mind and body by his honourable struggle, and hovering round him the phantoms of his own imagination—Waverley, Ravenswood, Jeanie Deans, Rob Roy, Caleb Balderstone, Dominie Sampson—all the familiar throng—with cavaliers, and Puritans, and Highland chiefs innumerable overflowing the chamber, and fading away in the dim distance beyond. I pictured them, fresh from traversing the world, and hanging down their heads in shame and sorrow, that, from all those lands into which they had carried gladness, instruction, and delight for millions, they brought him not one friendly hand to help to raise him from that sad, sad bed. No, nor brought him from that land in which his own language was spoken, and in every house and hut of which his own books were read in his own tongue, one grateful dollar piece to buy a garland for his grave. Oh! if every man who goes from here, as many do, to look upon that tomb in Dryburgh Abbey, would but remember this, and bring the recollection home!

Gentlemen, I thank you again, and once again, and many times to that. You have given me a new reason for remembering this day, which is already one of mark in my calendar, it being my birthday; and you have given those who are nearest and dearest to me a new reason for recollecting it with pride and interest. Heaven knows that, although I should grow ever so grey, I shall need nothing to remind me of this epoch in my life. But I am glad to think that from this time you are inseparably connected with every recurrence of this day; and, that on its periodical return, I shall always, in imagination, have the unfading pleasure of entertaining you as my guests, in return for the gratification you have afforded me to-night.

[Reply to a toast at a dinner given in New York, February 18, 1842: Washington Irving in the chair.]

GENTLEMEN,—I don't know how to thank you—I really don't know how. You would naturally suppose that my former experience would have given me this power, and that the difficulties in my way would have been dimin-

ished; but I assure you the fact is exactly the reverse, and I have completely baulked the ancient proverb that "a rolling stone gathers no moss;" and in my progress to this city I have collected such a weight of obligations and acknowledgment—I have picked up such an enormous mass of fresh moss at every point, and was so struck by the brilliant scenes of Monday night, that I thought I could never by any possibility grow any bigger. I have made, continually, new accumulations to such an extent that I am compelled to stand still, and can roll no more!

Gentlemen, we learn from the authorities, that, when fairy stones, or balls, or rolls of thread, stopped of their own accord—as I do not—it presaged some great catastrophe near at hand. The precedent holds good in this case. When I have remembered the short time I have before me to spend in this land of mighty interests, and the poor opportunity I can at best have of acquiring a knowledge of, and forming an acquaintance with it, I have felt it almost a duty to decline the honours you so generously heap upon me, and pass more quietly among you. For Argus himself, though he had but one mouth for his hundred eyes, would have found the reception of a public entertainment once a week too much for his greatest activity; and, as I would lose no scrap of the rich instruction and the delightful knowledge which meet me on every hand (and already I have gleaned a great deal from your hospitals and common jails)—I have resolved to take up my staff, and go my way rejoicing, and for the future to shake hands with America, not at parties but at home; and, therefore, gentlemen, I say to-night, with a full heart, and an honest purpose, and grateful feelings, that I bear, and shall ever bear, a deep sense of your kind, your affectionate and your noble greeting, which it is utterly impossible to convey in words. No European sky without, and no cheerful home or well-warmed room within, shall ever shut out this land from my vision. I shall often hear your words of welcome in my quiet room, and oftenest when most quiet; and shall see your faces in the blazing fire. If I should live to grow old, the scenes of this and other evenings will shine as brightly to my dull eyes fifty years hence as now; and the honours you bestow upon me shall be well remembered and paid back in my undying love, and honest endeavours for the good of my race.

Gentlemen, one other word with reference to this first person singular, and then I shall close. I came here in an open, honest, and confiding spirit, if ever man did, and because I felt a deep sympathy in your land; had I felt otherwise, I should have kept away. As I came here, and *am* here, without the least admixture of one-hundredth part of one grain of base alloy, without one feeling of unworthy reference

to self in any respect, I claim, in regard to the past, for the last time, my right in reason, in truth, and in justice, to approach, as I have done on two former occasions, a question of literary interest. I claim that justice be done; and I prefer this claim as one who has a right to speak and be heard. I have only to add that I shall be as true to you as you have been to me. I recognise in your enthusiastic approval of the creatures of my fancy, your enlightened care for the happiness of the many, your tender regard for the afflicted, your sympathy for the downcast, your plans for correcting and improving the bad, and for encouraging the good; and to advance these great objects shall be, to the end of my life, my earnest endeavour, to the extent of my humble ability. Having said thus much with reference to myself, I shall have the pleasure of saying a few words with reference to somebody else.

There is in this city a gentleman who, at the reception of one of my books—I well remember it was the "Old Curiosity Shop"—wrote to me in England a letter so generous, so affectionate, and so manly, that if I had written the book under every circumstance of disappointment, of discouragement, and difficulty, instead of the reverse, I should have found in the receipt of that letter my best and most happy reward. I answered him, and he answered me, and so we kept shaking hands autographically, as if no ocean rolled between us. I came here to this city eager to see him, and [laying his hand upon Irving's shoulder] here he sits! I need not tell you how happy and delighted I am to see him here to-night in this capacity.

Washington Irving! Why, gentlemen, I don't go upstairs to bed two nights out of the seven—as a very creditable witness near at hand can testify—I say I do not go to bed two nights out of the seven without taking Washington Irving under my arm; and, when I don't take him, I take his own brother, Oliver Goldsmith. Washington Irving! Why, of whom but him was I thinking the other day when I came up by the Hog's Back, the Frying Pan, Hell Gate, and all these places? Why, when, not long ago, I visited Shakespeare's birthplace, and went beneath the roof where he first saw light, whose name but *his* was pointed out to me upon the wall? Washington Irving, Diedrich Knickerbocker, Geoffrey Crayon—why, where can you go that they have not been there before? Is there an English farm—is there an English stream, an English city, or an English country-seat, where they have not been? Is there no Bracebridge Hall in existence? Has it no ancient shades or quiet streets?

In bygone times, when Irving left that hall, he left sitting in an old oak chair, in a small parlour of the Boar's Head, a little man with a red nose and an cilskin hat. When I came away he was sitting there still!—not a man *like*

him, but the same man—with the nose of immortal redness and the hat of an undying glaze! Crayon, while there, was on terms of intimacy with a certain radical fellow, who used to go about, with a hatful of newspapers, wofully out at elbows, and with a coat of great antiquity. Why, gentlemen, I know that man—Tibbles the elder, and he has not changed a hair; and, when I came away, he charged me to give his best respects to Washington Irving!

Leaving the town and the rustic life of England—forgetting this man, if we can—putting out of mind the country churchyard and the broken heart—let us cross the water again, and ask who has associated himself most closely with the Italian peasantry and the bandits of the Pyrenees? When the traveller enters his little chamber beyond the Alps—listening to the dim echoes of the long passages and spacious corridors—damp, and gloomy, and cold—as he hears the tempest beating with fury against his window, and gazes at the curtains, dark, and heavy, and covered with mould—and when all the ghost stories that ever were told come up before him—amid all his thick-coming fancies, whom does he think of? Washington Irving.

Go further still: go to the Moorish fountains, sparkling full in the moonlight—go among the water-carriers and the village gossips, living still as in days of old—and who has travelled among them before you, and peopled the Alhambra and made eloquent its shadows? Who awakes there a voice from every hill and in every cavern, and bids legends, which for centuries have slept a dreamless sleep, or watched unwinkingly, start up and pass before you in all their life and glory?

But leaving this again, who embarked with Columbus upon his gallant ship, traversed with him the dark and mighty ocean, leaped upon the land and planted there the flag of Spain, but this same man, now sitting by my side? And being here at home again, who is a more fit companion for money-diggers? And what pen but his has made Rip Van Winkle, playing at nine-pins on that thundering afternoon, as much part and parcel of the Catskill Mountains as any tree or crag that they can boast?

But these are topics familiar from my boyhood, and which I am apt to pursue; and lest I should be tempted now to talk too long about them, I will, in conclusion, give you a sentiment, most appropriate, I am sure, in the presence of such writers as Bryant, Halleck, and—but I suppose I must not mention the ladies here—"The Literature of America." She well knows how to do honour to her own literature and to that of other lands, when she chooses Washington Irving for her representative in the country of Cervantes.

[Given at the annual meeting of the Institutional Association of Lancashire and Cheshire, held in the Free-trade Hall, Manchester, December 3, 1858.]

It has of late years become noticeable in England that the autumn season produces an immense amount of public speaking. I notice that no sooner do the leaves begin to fall from the trees, than pearls of great price begin to fall from the lips of the wise men of the east, and north, and west, and south; and anybody may have them by the bushel, for the picking up. Now, whether the comet has this year had a quickening influence on this crop, as it is by some supposed to have had upon the corn harvest and the vintage, I do not know; but I do know that I have never observed the columns of the newspapers to groan so heavily under a pressure of orations, each vying with the other in the two qualities of having little or nothing to do with the matter in hand, and of being always addressed to any audience in the wide world rather than the audience to which it was delivered.

The autumn having gone, and the winter come, I am so sanguine as to hope that we in our proceedings may break through this enchanted circle and deviate from this precedent; the rather as we have something real to do, and are come together, I am sure, in all plain fellowship and straightforwardness, to do it. We have no little straws of our own to throw up to show us which way any wind blows, and we have no oblique biddings of our own to make for anything outside this hall.

At the top of the public announcement of this meeting are the words, "Institutional Association of Lancashire and Cheshire." Will you allow me, in reference to the meaning of those words, to present myself before you as the embodied spirit of ignorance recently enlightened, and to put myself through a short, voluntary examination as to the results of my studies. To begin with: the title did not suggest to me anything in the least like the truth. I have been for some years pretty familiar with the terms, "mechanics' institutions," and "literary societies," but they have, unfortunately, become too often associated in my mind with a body of great pretensions, lame as to some important member or other, which generally inhabits a new house much too large for it, which is seldom paid for, and which takes the name of the mechanics most grievously in vain, for I have usually seen a mechanic and a dodo in that place together.

I, therefore, began my education, in respect of the meaning of this title, very coldly indeed, saying to myself, "Here's the old story." But the perusal of a very few lines of my book soon gave me to understand that it was not by any means the old story; in short, that this association is expressly designed to correct the old story, and to prevent its defects from becoming

perpetuate]. I learned that this Institutional Association is the union, in one central head, of one hundred and fourteen local mechanics' institutions and mutual improvement societies, at an expense of no more than five shillings to each society; suggesting to all how they can best communicate with and profit by the fountain-head and one another; keeping their best aims steadily before them; advising them how those aims can be best attained; giving a direct end and object to what might otherwise easily become waste forces; and sending among them not only oral teachers, but, better still, boxes of excellent books, called "freeitinerating libraries." I learned that these books are constantly making the circuit of hundreds upon hundreds of miles, and are constantly being read with inexpressible relish by thousands upon thousands of toiling people, but that they are never damaged or defaced by one rude hand. These and other like facts lead me to consider the immense importance of the fact, that no little cluster of working-men's cottages can arise in any Lancashire or Cheshire valley, at the foot of any running stream which enterprise hunts out for water-power, but it has its educational friend and companion ready for it, willing for it, acquainted with its thoughts and ways and turns of speech even before it has come into existence.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, this is the main consideration that has brought me here. No central association at a distance could possibly do for those working-men what this local association does. No central association at a distance could possibly understand them as this local association does. No central association at a distance could possibly put them in that familiar and easy communication one with another, as that I, man or boy, eager for knowledge, in that valley seven miles off, should know of you, man or boy, eager for knowledge, in that valley twelve miles off, and should occasionally trudge to meet you, that you may impart your learning in one branch of acquisition to me, whilst I impart mine in another to you. Yet this is distinctly a feature, and a most important feature, of this society.

On the other hand, it is not to be supposed that these honest men, however zealous, could, as a rule, succeed in establishing and maintaining their own institutions of themselves. It is obvious that combination must materially diminish their cost, which is in time a vital consideration; and it is equally obvious that experience, essential to the success of all combination, is especially so when its object is to diffuse the results of experience and of reflection.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, the student of the present profitable history of this society does not stop here in his learning; when he has got so far, he finds with interest and pleasure that the parent society at certain stated periods invites the more eager and enterprising members

of the local society to submit themselves to voluntary examination in various branches of useful knowledge, of which examination it takes the charge and arranges the details, and invites the successful candidates to come to Manchester to receive the prizes and certificates of merit which it impartially awards. The most successful of the competitors in the list of these examinations are now among us, and these little marks of recognition and encouragement I shall have the honour presently of giving them, as they come before you, one by one, for that purpose.

I have looked over a few of those examination papers, which have comprised history, geography, grammar, arithmetic, bookkeeping, decimal coinage, mensuration, mathematics, social economy, the French language—in fact, they comprise all the keys that open all the locks of knowledge. I felt most devoutly gratified, as to many of them, that they had not been submitted to me to answer, for I am perfectly sure that if they had been, I should have had mighty little to bestow upon myself to-night. And yet it is always to be observed and seriously remembered that these examinations are undergone by people whose lives have been passed in a continual fight for bread, and whose whole existence has been a constant wrestle with

“Those twin gaolers of the daring heart—
Low birth and iron fortune.”

I could not but consider, with extraordinary admiration, that these questions have been replied to, not by men like myself, the business of whose life is with writing and with books, but by men, the business of whose life is with tools and with machinery.

Let me endeavour to recall, as well as my memory will serve me, from among the most interesting cases of prize-holders and certificate-gainers who will appear before you, some two or three of the most conspicuous examples. There are two poor brothers from near Chorley, who work from morning to night in a coal pit, and who, in all weathers, have walked eight miles a night, three nights a week, to attend the classes in which they have gained distinction. There are two poor boys from Bollington, who began life as piecers at one shilling or eighteenpence a week, and the father of one of whom was cut to pieces by the machinery at which he worked, but not before he had himself founded the institution in which this son has since come to be taught. These two poor boys will appear before you to-night, to take the second-class prize in chemistry. There is a plasterer from Bury, sixteen years of age, who took a third-class certificate last year at the hands of Lord Brougham; he is this year again successful in a competition three times as severe. There is a waggon-maker from the same place, who knew little or absolutely nothing until he was a grown man, and who has learned all he knows, which is a great

deal, in the local institution. There is a chain-maker, in very humble circumstances, and working hard all day, who walks six miles a night, three nights a week, to attend the classes in which he has won so famous a place. There is a moulder in an iron foundry, who, whilst he was working twelve hours a day before the furnace, got up at four o'clock in the morning to learn drawing. “The thought of my lads,” he writes in his modest account of himself, “in their peaceful slumbers above me, gave me fresh courage, and I used to think that if I should never receive any personal benefit, I might instruct them when they came to be of an age to understand the mighty machines and engines which have made our country—England—pre-eminent in the world’s history.” There is a piecer at mule frames, who could not read at eighteen, who is now a man of little more than thirty, who is the sole support of an aged mother, who is arithmetical teacher in the institution in which he himself was taught, who writes of himself that he made the resolution never to take up a subject without keeping to it, and who has kept to it with such an astonishing will that he is now well versed in Euclid and algebra, and is the best French scholar in Stockport. The drawing classes in that same Stockport are taught by a working blacksmith; and the pupils of that working blacksmith will receive the highest honours of to-night. Well may it be said of that good blacksmith, as it was written of another of his trade, by the American poet:

“Tolling, rejoicing, sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees its close.
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night’s repose.”

To pass from the successful candidates to the delegates from local societies now before me, and to content myself with one instance from amongst them. There is among their number a most remarkable man, whose history I have read with feelings that I could not adequately express under any circumstances, and least of all when I know he hears me, who worked when he was a mere baby at hand-loom weaving until he dropped from fatigue: who began to teach himself as soon as he could earn five shillings a week: who is now a botanist, acquainted with every production of the Lancashire valley: who is a naturalist, and has made and preserved a collection of the eggs of British birds, and stuffed the birds: who is now a conchologist, with a very curious, and in some respects an original collection of fresh-water shells, and has also preserved and collected the mosses of fresh water and of the sea: who is worthily the president of his own local literary institution, and who was at his work this time last night as foreman in a mill.

So stimulating has been the influence of these

bright examples, and many more, that I notice among the applications from Blackburn for preliminary test examination papers, one from an applicant who gravely fills up the printed form by describing himself as ten years of age, and who, with equal gravity, describes his occupation as "nursing a little child." Nor are these things confined to the men. The women employed in factories, milliners' work, and domestic service, have begun to show, as it is fitting they should, a most decided determination not to be outdone by the men; and the women of Preston in particular, have so honourably distinguished themselves, and shown in their examination papers such an admirable knowledge of the science of household management and household economy, that if I were a working bachelor of Lancashire or Cheshire, and if I had not cast my eye or set my heart upon any lass in particular, I should positively get up at four o'clock in the morning with the determination of the iron moulder himself, and should go to Preston in search of a wife.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, these instances, and many more, daily occurring, always accumulating, are surely better testimony to the working of this association, than any number of speakers could possibly present to you. Surely the presence among us of these indefatigable people is the association's best and most effective triumph in the present and the past; and is its noblest stimulus to effort in the future. As its temporary mouthpiece, I would beg to say to that portion of the company who attend to receive the prizes, that the institution can never hold itself apart from them—can never set itself above them; that their distinction and success must be its distinction and success; and that there can be but one heart beating between them and it. In particular, I would most especially entreat them to observe that nothing will ever be further from this association's mind than the impertinence of patronage. The prizes that it gives, and the certificates that it gives, are mere admiring assurances of sympathy with so many striving brothers and sisters, and are only valuable for the spirit in which they are given, and in which they are received. The prizes are money prizes, simply because the institution does not presume to doubt that persons who have so well governed themselves, know best how to make a little money serviceable—because it would be a shame to treat them like grown-up babies by laying it out for them, and because it knows it is given, and knows it is taken, in perfect clearness of purpose, perfect trustfulness, and, above all, perfect independence.

Ladies and gentlemen, reverting once more to the whole collective audience before me, I will, in another two minutes, release the hold which your favour has given me on your attention. Of the advantages of knowledge I have said, and I shall say nothing. Of the certainty with

which the man who grasps it under difficulties rises in his own respect and in usefulness to the community, I have said, and I shall say nothing. In the city of Manchester, in the county of Lancaster, both of them remarkable for self-taught men, that were superfluous indeed. For the same reason I rigidly abstain from putting together any of the shattered fragments of that poor clay image of a parrot, which was once always saying, without knowing why, or what it meant, that knowledge was a dangerous thing. I should as soon think of piecing together the mutilated remains of any wretched Hindoo who has been blown from an English gun. Both, creatures of the past, have been—as my friend Mr Carlyle vigorously has it—"blasted into space;" and there, as to this world, is an end of them.

So I desire, in conclusion, only to sound two strings. In the first place, let me congratulate you upon the progress which real mutual improvement societies are making at this time in your neighbourhood, through the noble agency of individual employers and their families, whom you can never too much delight to honour. Elsewhere, through the agency of the great railway companies, some of which are bestirring themselves in this matter with a gallantry and generosity deserving of all praise. Secondly and lastly, let me say one word out of my own personal heart, which is always very near to it in this connection. Do not let us, in the midst of the visible objects of nature, whose workings we can tell of in figures, surrounded by machines that can be made to the thousandth part of an inch, acquiring every day knowledge which can be proved upon a slate or demonstrated by a microscope—do not let us, in the laudable pursuit of the facts that surround us, neglect the fancy and the imagination which equally surround us as a part of the great scheme. Let the child have its fables; let the man or woman into which it changes, always remember those fables tenderly. Let numerous graces and ornaments that cannot be weighed and measured, and that seem at first sight idle enough, continue to have their places about us, be we never so wise. The hardest head may co-exist with the softest heart. The union and just balance of those two is always a blessing to the possessor, and always a blessing to mankind. The Divine teacher was as gentle and considerate as He was powerful and wise. You all know how He could still the raging of the sea, and could hush a little child. As the utmost results of the wisdom of men can only be at last to help to raise this earth to that condition to which His doctrine, untainted by the blindnesses and passions of men, would have exalted it long ago; so let us always remember that He set us the example of blending the understanding and the imagination, and that, following it ourselves, we tread in His steps, and help our race on to

its better and best days. Knowledge, as all followers of it must know, has a very limited power indeed, when it informs the head alone;

but when it informs the head and the heart too, it has a power over life and death, the body and the soul, and dominates the universe.

NORMAN MACLEOD, D.D.,

1812-1872.

MISSIONS TO INDIA.

I.

[THE conclusion of an address given before the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1868, on his return from India.]

I might use stronger language, and assert that it ought not to be tolerated by any reasonable man, unless proved to be unavoidable, that our several Churches should reproduce, in order to perpetuate in the new world of a Christianised India, those forms and symbols which in the old world have become marks, not of our union as Christians, but of our disunion as sects. We may not, indeed, be responsible for these divisions in the Church which have come down to us from the past. We did not make them, nor can we now, perhaps, unmake them. We find ourselves born into some one of them, and so we accept of it, and make the most of it as the best we can get in the whole circumstances in which we are placed. But must we establish these different organisations in India? Is each part to be made to represent the whole? Is the grand army to remain broken up into separate divisions, each to recruit to its own standard, and to invite the Hindoos to wear our respective uniforms, adopt our respective Shibboleths, learn and repeat our respective war-cries, and even make caste marks of our wounds and scars, which to us are but the sad mementoes of old battles? Or, to drop all metaphors, shall Christian converts in India be necessarily grouped and stereotyped into Episcopal Churches, Presbyterian Churches, Lutheran Churches, Methodist Churches, Baptist Churches, or Independent Churches, and adopt as their respective creeds the Confession of Faith, the Thirty-nine Articles, or some other formula approved of by our forefathers, and the separating sign of some British or American sect? Whether any Church seriously entertains this design I know not, though I suspect it of some, and I feel assured that it will be realised in part, as conversions increase by means of foreign missions, and be at last perpetuated, unless it is now carefully guarded against by every opportunity being watched and taken advantage of to propagate a different

idea, and to rear up an independent and all-inclusive native Indian Church. By such a Church I mean one which shall be organised and governed by the natives themselves, as far as possible, independently of us. We could of course claim, as Christians and fellow-subjects, to be recognised as brethren, and to be received among its members, or, if it should so please both parties, serve among its ministers, and rejoice always to be its best friends and generous supporters. In all this we would only have them to do to us as we should feel bound to do to them. Such a Church might, as taught by experience, mould its outward form of government and worship according to its inner wants and outward circumstances, guided by history and by the teaching and spirit of Christianity. Its creed—for no Christian society can exist without some known and professed beliefs—would include those truths which had been confessed by the Catholic Church of Christ since the first; and, as necessary to its very existence as a Church it would recognise the supreme authority of Jesus Christ and His apostles. It would also have, like the whole Church, its Lord's Day for public worship, and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Thus might a new temple be reared on the plains of India unlike perhaps any to be seen in our western lands, yet with all our goodly stones built up in its fabric, and with all our spiritual worship within its walls of the one living and true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. A Church like this would, from its very nationality, attract many a man who does not wish to be ranked among the adherents of mission Churches. It would dispose, also, of many difficulties inseparable from our position, whether regarding baptism or the selection and support of a native ministry. And, finally, it would give ample scope, for many a year to come, for all the aid and efforts which our home churches and missionaries could afford by schools and colleges, personal labour, and also by money contributions, to establish, strengthen, and extend it.

Moreover, it seems to me that India affords varied and remarkable elements for contributing many varied gifts and talents to such a Church as this. The simple peasant and scholarly pun-