

THE BERKELEYAN.

"WESTWARD THE COURSE OF EMPIRE TAKES ITS WAY."

Vol. II.

University of California, Berkeley: June, 1875.

No. 6.

LIBERALITY IN THOUGHT.

Oration by F. M. OSTRANDER, delivered at the Junior Exhibition, May 14th, 1875.

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

There appear to be inherent qualities in the nature of man which predispose him to oppose all new theories.

Superstitious, he is often afraid to accept a new truth lest it might conflict with some revered principles, which he has no reason to defend, save that his forefathers adopted them.

Selfish, he will not endorse theories which he knows to be true, because they would interfere with his personal gratifications.

Stubborn, he will allow neither justice or reason to penetrate the crust of prejudice which early training has formed about his inner soul.

Placing infinite faith in the old maxim, "So many men, so many minds," he believes the majority of mankind to be in the right, and so lazily floats down the stream of life without making an effort to leave the common popular channel himself, but pulling back, and holding down those who would.

The result is, that no new truth has ever been established, without first fighting against this ignorant, superstitious, popular, anti-progressive multitude, which has often, shamefully often, crushed it entirely, only to allow it to rise again after the lapse of centuries if ever.

The noblest, wisest men that have ever lived, underwent the most horrid persecutions, and suffered the cruellest deaths, for the very truths which we are this day enjoying. The victims of a narrow-minded people who supposed that their popular theories were infallible.

To us it seems almost incredible, that such things ever could have taken place. Nevertheless they did, and are—no! they are not repeated to-day. We no longer kill men outright for uttering their doctrines, cowardly, we allow them to live physically, only that we may persecute them socially. In many respects we are just as narrow minded as we were two thousand years ago. Just as jealous of our pet theories; just as impatient at having them contradicted by these new fangled humbugs, as we term them. Now is this right? Is this the true way to engender progress? Is this justice to ourselves, or charity to mankind? But how are we to help it? By encouraging individuality and liberality of thought, which will result in broad-thinking men. Aye, but you say, "We are too liberal already; too many weak, worthless doctrines are being cast upon the public, deluding our young and weak-minded people from their proper duties, and thus proving a loathsome bane to society; there should be some measure taken to prevent these doctrines from being thus sown broad-cast among our young men." Aye, my friends, but these doctrines are here, and we must abide them. That many of them are dangerous, there is not a doubt; that many of them are partly false there is no doubt; but that they are wholly false there is a doubt; and in this case they

must be sifted, thoroughly sifted; if there is a grain of truth in them, humanity demands it, and in the name of humanity it must be found. In handling the pitch we may be more or less defiled; but individual worth must give way when the good of mankind demands it. As the soldier may fall while battling for his country, so we may fall while battling for the truth. One favor we ask: Don't misinterpret the enemies' strength to us. Don't wall us in with false prejudices and narrow habits. Let us go to battle unhampered by harassing doubts and fears, and we pledge you, that truth shall stand forth stronger and brighter than ever before.

Ladies and Gentlemen, many of you are saying at this moment, "Young man, don't be too liberal for your own welfare."

This is impossible! We may be too narrow-minded for our own welfare, but we cannot be too liberal minded. Now that we have made this bold assertion, it remains for us to prove it.

In the first place, let us fully understand each other what is meant by liberal minded men.

The botanist chooses a flower which has all the parts a flower can have, and uses it as a typical flower by which he analyzes all others.

Let us assume the same privilege with our liberal mind. We will find one that is perfect, and use it as a typical mind by which we may compare all others.

We find that our typical mind has three parts; reason, justice and charity. Hence one who lays claim to a liberal mind must consent to discuss the most diverse subjects upon the neutral grounds of reason, justice and charity. Upon this basis let us proceed to analyze some of our so-called liberal minded men, and ascertain if we can, where they really belong in the category of mankind. First, we will take one who is popularly supposed to be the most liberal of all mankind, namely—the atheist. He denies the existence of God—ungraciously denies his Creator; He who gives him breath to utter the denial. He assures his brother that he has no soul, and is consequently no better than his dog. Is this charity? He walks out into the field by day, and beholds all nature smiling about him; his eye rests upon yon generous oak, the birds in it gladden his ears with the sweetest music; he looks over the fields, and beholds the school-children romping noisily home from school; at his feet, he beholds the flowers springing into existence; all about him is activity and life, from the tiny floweret at his feet, to yon grand old oak; the birds, the school-children, the singing birds, and all working in harmony. Yet he says: "There is no God." The sun descends behind the mountain tops; how he lights up the dark heavy clouds; how he caresses the flowers from those rugged hills, causing them to blush with pleasure; and how he seems to halt just for a moment on yonder mountain top, as if on purpose to kiss each school-child, each brook and lake, each great strong tree and trembling flower, a sweet good night, as he passes on to gladden life in another world. Is there no God? *Is this all chance?* Now

all is still—so still; silently, one by one the stars appear, and soon the whole heavens are studded with brilliants. He sees them, he knows the movements which they make, their complicated systems, and with what precision they travel, and ascribes it all to chance.

"There is no God," he says. Since he disbelieves in the existence of God, he rejects the Bible, and would burn a book whose teachings are the very corner stone of civilization. In doing this would he not be doing a great injustice to the world? Have we not shown that the atheist, instead of being the broad, liberal minded man that we supposed him to be, is the very opposite, possessing a mind too little, cramped, conceited, to entertain a thought so grand as that which pertains to an infinite God? He is unwittingly the greatest enemy to true liberality of thought, in that he implies that it is that which it certainly is not. The mistake lies in the fact that we are liable to make extravagant assertions for liberal and great thoughts.

There are a great many young men, who being ashamed to think like other people, because they think that it shows a lack of better sense than the mediocrity possess, have come to the conclusion to become infidels and atheists. When remonstrated with, they will put on an air of great superiority and assert that they are liberal thinkers. You have all heard young men assert their infidelity, when they could not bring forth a single able, (much less to say original) argument to support their disbelief, and who could not repeat a dozen texts from the Bible, but who could repeat Draper's "Science and Religion" by rote, ending with, "Am not I liberal minded?" Do not chide or sneer at them, ladies and gentlemen, but *pity* them. They become sceptic through affectation and conceit. Patient study, and perfect impartiality should precede rational conviction, whether it end in faith or doubt; how many of these precocious young men are capable of standing such a test?

Concerning the infidel we have little to say. He doubts that the Bible is divinely inspired, and brings forth an army of reasons to sustain him. He may have reasons to cause him to doubt, but he is heartlessly unjust, when he would endeavor to throw down the foundation of all civilized society, and devoid of charity, for wishing to deprive the Christian of his dearest comfort. Thus, of the three requisites for a liberal mind, he has one, namely—reason; but wanting in justice and charity.

The Christian believes in a Supreme Being, and accepts the Bible as divine. The very nature of this work teaches him to be reasonable, just and charitable, and the true Christian should be so. But there are many who are true Christians, in the common acceptance of the term, who are the very opposite, being unreasonable, unjust, and uncharitable, all of which redounds to their own injury, for between their doctrine and that of the atheist there are hundreds of theories, all of which contain more or less truth, deserving and demanding impartial discussion. Why should they hesitate to discuss

these theories with fairness, not standing away off out of danger to themselves, being content with hurling such vile epithets as atheist, infidel, and sceptic at their opponents?

Oh, let us lay aside these base fears, born of false prejudices, and boldly meet our enemy upon the neutral ground of reason, justice and charity.

Such controversies cannot help being productive of great good. If nothing more they will leave the truth more firmly established, because more firmly tried. We should not remain ignorant of these things, any more than the shepherd should, without means of defence, drive his flock into a country infested by savage beasts.

Mr. President, it is better to believe too much than too little. In the words of Dr. Johnson, "A man may live in foul air, but he must die in an exhausted receiver."

Thus we have shown, that in order to be liberal minded a man is not necessarily obliged to be an atheist, or a Christian, but he must be one who seeking for the truth, is willing to give the doctrines which lie between these two extremities, a conscientious investigation.

Now that we have ascertained what a truly liberal mind is, the question asserts itself, how are we to educate our minds to be thus liberal?

Let us learn to be honest, not honest as a man is who would scorn to tell a lie; not honest as one who would lose his right hand rather than steal your money; but more than this, let us be honest not only to others, but to ourselves, crushing false prejudices from our hearts, and seeking to root error from our souls, substituting for it the truth. Let us be brave; not as a man is brave who gives his life for another, not brave as one who in the moment of passion, rushes into the very cannon's mouth; but as one who having found a truth, dare maintain it. Let us be generous; not as he who feeds the poor; not as he who endows noble institutions; aye, more than that, let us be generous as he who extends a charitable hand to his opponents, giving them a chance for life. And above all, and through all, let us bear constantly in our minds, the noble sentiment that "*Above all things is humanity.*"

THE "HOLY GRAIL" OF TENNYSON.

Elaine and the Holy Grail are decidedly companion poems. They alike differ from the most of the other Idyls of the King in having for their respective objects ideas that are not entirely subordinated to the general plot of the collection to which they belong. Enid, to be sure, resembles them in this, but they again differ from Enid in being the expression of conceptions that are at once bolder and more profound. In most of the other Idyls the grand aim is to give a picture of an ideal world made beautiful by the infusion into it of the spirit of one half-divine man, but gradually involved in a common ruin through the irresistible onflow of evil. In Enid, as in a sort of interlude, is given a picture of wifely devotion that triumphs over unreasoning jealousy. But in Elaine and the Holy Grail all other aims are subordinated to that of glorifying two great powers of the soul: namely, in the one poem the higher passions, and in the other the higher religious sentiments. Of the two poems the former is more easily comprehended, and the latter is more deeply suggestive. In the one we are inclined at first to admire only the heroine; in the other we forget persons in thinking of the subject.

The two are alike again in leaving us with the impression that deep and pure emotion has in itself a reality that is altogether independent of that of its object. Feeling that is noble and strong, though it may pursue phantoms, though it may be deceived in its trust in realities, triumphs by its own right, without any reference to the external world; such is the truth which these poems, each in its way, seem at least partially intended to convey. It is a truth that is not very easily to be comprehended at first sight. But nevertheless it is one that Tennyson has very often illustrated in his poems. It is one that he seems to appreciate very fully; and there is certainly no greater benefit that he could confer on our matter-of-fact age than to emphasize just such a truth. The fact that we find it hard to understand, shows how much we need to have it impressed upon us. Since we no longer possess the myth-making faculty, since more and more, as time goes on, we discover ourselves unable to gain comfort for the overthrow of cherished hopes, and the wounding of the keenest sensibilities, by turning from the actual world to dreams of some fairy-land where all is to be made right, and to be arranged for our own individual benefit, since in consequence we often take refuge in pretending to despise ourselves for feeling at all, it is well that we should be reminded of the realities existing *within* ourselves, realities that no argument can shake, and that no disappointment can destroy. As in these columns the attempt has already been made to illustrate this fact by means of some study of the character of Elaine, it may not be out of place to investigate how the same fact may be illustrated by the consideration of the idea conveyed in the Holy Grail.

There is no need of stating at any length the story of the poem before us. It is well known and not specially complicated. In brief it is as follows. The vessel of the Holy Grail, long since brought to England by Joseph of Arimathea, and afterwards caught away because the men amongst whom it was were too sinful, appears first to a nun, sister of the knight Sir Percivale, on account of her holiness and her fasting and prayer, and next, not much later, is borne by supernatural hands into Arthur's Hall, where his knights are sitting, on a day when the king himself is absent. But on this occasion the Grail is "covered over by a luminous cloud," and is itself unseen by all the knights save Sir Galahad, who had been honored by the special blessing of the nun. When the vision vanishes, many of the knights, including Sir Percivale, aroused to a holy fervour by the fact that the holy vessel has been so near to them without having been seen by them, swear a vow to go on a quest after it until they shall see it, or shall have passed a year in search of it. Sir Galahad joins them. Warned on his return by the king, who sees but too plainly that so holy a quest is not for the most of them, they set out. At the end of the year scarce a tithe of them return. Of those who do come back, three only have visions to tell of. Lancelot has been near the Grail, but is not sure whether or not he saw it; Percivale, led on by Galahad, has been permitted to see it afar off, while his companion is taken away from him into glory. Sir Bors has been vouchsafed a single unlooked for vision, while he lay in a foe's prison. The rest of the knights have wandered in vain. But of the three, each "has seen according to his sight." The greatest of the knights, tainted by a strange and deadly sin, has glimpses of the vision because he is so great, but fails of a full sight because he is not pure. His relative, Sir Bors, holy and generous of soul, is too full of anxiety for the fate of Lancelot to give himself up wholly to the in-

fluence of religious fervor, but at the moment when he least expected it, he finds himself far higher in the scale of worth than he had thought, and is granted a momentary sight of the object of his search. Sir Percivale, struggling fiercely with all that is lower in his nature, attains at last, through the personal influence of a yet higher and more harmonious spirit, to the ability to see the holy vision unclouded, and so losing all interest in worldly affairs, enters into the life of the monastery. But Sir Galahad has never been obliged to go in quest of the vision. He went forth only that he might follow it whithersoever it would lead him; and he was led through continuous triumphs to final glory. To use the conclusion given in the words of the king;

"Out of those to whom the vision came
My greatest hardly will believe he saw;
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And leaving human wrongs to right themselves,
Cares but to pass into the silent life.
And one hath seen the vision face to face,
And now his chair desires him here in vain,
However they may crown him elsewhere."

The general purpose of such a picture as this is evident. No one fails of understanding that the Holy Grail stands as the representative of the highest and noblest ideals of the soul, those which call forth the religious, as opposed to the passionate emotions. Each one attains to an understanding of these highest things in proportion as his life is elevated and harmonious. That some such idea as this is the principal one in Tennyson's mind needs no proof. But there are problems suggested by the poem which this view does not satisfy. Something more is needed to complete it. For a query instantly arises in our minds, an unpoetical query, but a sincere one: what use to us are all the emotions that this poem arouses? In Elaine we felt no such difficulty because there we were dealing with real facts, facts to which every-day life furnishes plenty of parallels, even if the feelings that the poet called up seemed at first a little unsubstantial. But here the facts have apparently no parallel. There are no quests of the kind represented for us to go upon. In fact the whole imagery of the poem is unreal and hard to understand. We see that there is some deep meaning in it all, but that meaning continually eludes us. We have a double sympathy in our minds as we read, on the one side with the old monk to whom Sir Percivale is relating the whole tale, when he asks whether the Holy Grail is

"The phantom of a cup that comes and goes."

and on the other with Sir Percivale at the words,

"Nay, monk! what phantom? answer'd Percivale,
The cup, the cup itself from which our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his own."

That is to say we are divided in feeling between the consideration that it is after all but a phantom which is sought, and our certainty that there is something very real in the quest itself.

The problem, or rather problems, suggested by these thoughts cannot be followed out to their limits here. Let us consider only one side of the poem, or in other words one of the problems. Let us consider the Holy Grail as the representative of the Beautiful in the highest experiences of it which we are capable of having. The Beautiful, I say, because, in the enjoyment of beauty, the religious and passionate emotions meet and blend, so that we cannot say just what forms of beauty are of a nature to awaken the emotions of piety, and what of a nature to awaken other emotions. Therefore what we have already noticed in the study of Elaine will be of some value to us here. Now then taking the

Holy Grail as the representative of this, let us see what sort of significance the search for the Grail has for us. Must we regard it after all but a quest after a phantom that comes and goes, or as a search for "the cup itself."

It will be understood that we are seeking what illustration of general principles Tennyson's conception can give us, and that we are agreed that the poet had some high conception in his mind when he wrote the poem, which conception is the real thing that is to have significance to us. But we shall not probably be able to draw anything that can properly be called a *moral* from it. A moral, as usually understood, is something of far less value than an artistic idea lying at the foundation of a work of art. We shall not find any direct precept locked away in the recesses of the poem, but if we understand it rightly we shall be brought to feel in sympathy with a certain wide and general view of things. And with this understanding let us go on to the consideration of the matter before us.

In Elaine we were made to feel that there is a reality and a nobility in true, deep feeling, which is independent of the character of the objects on which it spends itself. Elaine lost forever hope in the external reality of her fancies, but she still retained an unswerving faith in the true worth of the fancies themselves. She felt that they were all of life to her. And even when the contrast between the internal and the external became too strong and too crushing in its harshness, and when her gentle soul faded away from so sad a life, we felt that in her very death there was triumph. We could not say that it was all a delusion. We were made sure that there was a lasting reality in such emotion, a true sublimity in such a death. But in the Holy Grail, as we are now looking at it, a broader and more difficult problem is presented, closely linked however with its own solution. Here is no longer the task of seeing a ground-work of reality in the fancies springing from one passion. We have now to see wherein lies the true lasting element in the fancies of every sort which are directed to high and noble ends. We are to discover at least a portion of the truth which is hidden behind all the fantastic visions of the Beautiful which men have indulged in from age to age. We are to sympathize with every exhibition of that spirit, whatever it is, whether we choose to call it fanaticism or inspiration, with that spirit which has never allowed human nature to rest content with the existing realities of life, but has ever urged it on to seek to realize ideal conceptions of beauty. This spirit it is which has written poems and carved out sculptures, which has founded religions and given birth to systems of philosophy, which has sent nations on crusades and convulsed the world with great reforms, all for the accomplishment of one end. To see, to come near to, to live the beautiful, or the sublimely upright, this, however dimly, unconsciously, imperfectly, has yet ever been really the object of Humanity's most significant mental movements. And we are to endeavor to understand this spirit. We are to see that it is the real power underlying the confused mass of superstition, prejudice, aspiration, devotion, which has been at one time the disgrace, at another the glory of our race.

To understand just how all this is true, we shall have to assume but few facts, and those of the most obvious kind. We must suppose it granted first that there are lower and higher passions of the human soul, and that the difference between the two is so great as to be very properly termed a difference in kind. We must also suppose it granted that the effect of a contemplation of beauty in natural objects and in mental experiences, is of a nature to elevate the mind and to give these higher

feelings the predominance. In the third place we must suppose it understood as a fact of universal experience that this elevated mental condition is only to be attained with the greatest effort, that as the desire for it is the sign of an awakened soul, so the attainment of it is the proof of a perfected soul. One thing more we must claim, even though it may not be so readily granted, and that is that this elevation of mind, attainable indeed only by some such road as we have indicated, does not yet depend for its attainment on the objective reality of the beliefs which have governed the subject during his progress. The love of and the communion with the Beautiful and the Good is the great requisite. The form under which the Beautiful or the Good is conceived is incidental.

This last proposition may seem doubtful to many, but a moment's consideration will show its truth. How many souls have come to the highest points of human attainment, whose ideas as to the way that must be traveled differed endlessly both from those of their fellow-creatures and from those of one another. Think if you will of a St. Paul, strong in sublime and passionate belief and in his simple doctrine of the efficacy of faith, and of a Buddha, alone among his fellow-men and among the ages in his self-reliance, his lofty search for that calm grandeur of soul which no misfortune could shake, and no passion disturb, in that strange love for humanity which led him to counsel to each man a distinct individuality. Think of a Plato, worshipping the Eternal Ideas, and of a Spinoza, lost in the contemplation of the Infinite All. Think of a Luther, whose life was an eternal conflict, first with himself and then with what he thought to be the supernatural powers of darkness in the world around him, and of a Goethe to whose mind the universe was but one infinite harmony made up of variations on a single theme, and that theme, love. These all, religious reformers, philosophers, poets, active and passive, believers in a world blackened with the smoke of supernatural conflicts, or calm contemplators of an undisturbed order of nature, all alike attained heights to which not many may ever hope to follow them. Were their systems any of them essential to this end? We are not in saying this for a moment denying the importance of truth. We are not saying that in some systems there does not lie far more assistance to progress than there lies in others, just as some systems contain far more of the truth than do others. But we are claiming simply that, from the special point of view which we are now occupying, system, dogma, faith, are indeed necessary for the individual who holds them, so long as he continues to hold them, but yet are not such things as will on the one hand exclude from grand attainments those who hold them not, or ensure grand attainments to those who possess them.

If with these facts in our minds we return to the consideration of the poem, the whole will, I think, be much plainer. This Holy Grail is not to us a mere fancy, symbolic only, and that imperfectly, but it is "the cup itself." That is to say we have not to make the reduction from the imagery of the poem to the imagery of our own creed before we can understand the whole. For the essential point of the entire work, the central feeling which is aroused, is as real to us as it could ever be to a Sir Galahad. There is no need to translate the language of tears into any human tongue. Tears speak to the heart and speak for themselves. Just so there is no reason to seek for the particular object which in our form of belief can be supposed to correspond with the Holy Grail before we can appreciate the value of the tale to us. Nor is there reason for losing

sight of that value in case we cannot find in our system any such object. For the beautiful is a real thing. The elevation of soul which we seek is real. The potency of the beautiful as well as the necessity of continued struggle with ourselves, is real. And herein lies the great power of the poem, in that it arouses us to an understanding of all this, encourages us to new efforts for the attainment of so great an end, teaches us the possibility of ultimate success.

Permit me to touch on one other point which serves to set forth our principle in a clearer light. You will remember the last warning of King Arthur to his departing knights, that most of them would "follow wandering fires, lost in the quagmire." What, you have perhaps said, if the Holy Grail represents anything real, how can it be true that the most of those who follow it do so but to be deceived? Ah, therein lies a great truth. It is because the Holy Grail represents internal rather than external truth, that only those whose minds are prepared can be successful in searching for it. This grand elevation of mind, this appreciation of that which is noblest, is not the prize of any system of doctrine. It is not an external reward given for deeds, but it is an internal gift, attainable only by long effort in the right direction. Let a man's system be what it may, and yet, unless he be prepared, for him to go on this quest is but to follow wandering fires. The Holy Grail is indeed real, but the quest is not for him.

The great requisite then for the attainment of that higher grade of life which is alone truly cultured, is devotion to higher ends. Systems of belief and of doctrine are one thing. In so far as they are true they are to be believed, in so far as they are noble they are to be followed; but no one can look over the history of humanity with a truly human interest without seeing how large a part of the powers for advancement of life and of character have come from within the souls of men. Over and above all the differences of feeling and of theological opinion which have separated men, have rendered them bitter personal enemies, have prevented the outflowing of sympathy from heart to heart, and have walled up as in a dungeon the kindness that could make them work better together in mutual interest, above all this that is lower, all this that is discordant, one grand purpose has arisen which to our eyes, as we look back, seems to bring into indissoluble unity all great souls. That purpose is the one directed to the imitation of the noble, to the understanding of and communion with the beautiful. Its presence is sufficient to distinguish unmistakably the true nobleman. We ourselves may be in unchangeable disagreement with the beliefs of such a one. We may think his ideas crude, and his judgment worthy of little respect, but in this capacity he is and must be our teacher, and we only his scholars. Just as, in some moments of grand enthusiasm, when great interests were at stake and great victories were being won, men have forgotten all the prejudices of clique, of class, of nation, of race even, and have clasped hands in the all-possessing feeling of a common humanity, knowing for the moment nothing but the fact that they were inspired by common hopes, and were laboring for common ends, so too we, at times when we recognize the value and the grandeur of these higher aims, forget all the petty distinctions of creed, of dogma, even of age, and for a moment remember only those common needs which all humanity has felt, which every individual has tried to attain in his own way. The ways and means indeed have differed endlessly, but the spirit has remained the same. The grand fact is unchanged through all, that the higher attainments of life

are the result only of long and earnest endeavor, of self-sacrifice, of pain, of loneliness, and of devotion. Over what hills and valleys the long roads may have run is not of so much importance. That the goal has been attained is what we most of all wish to know.

One other idea suggests itself as a sequel to the thoughts we have been pursuing. This is the idea of the value which false theories and delusive hopes may sometimes have been to the race and to individuals. We are too apt to judge of all these things merely by their outward results. If the latter have been agreeable, well and good; but if the theories have been exploded, and the hopes have been shown to be but dreams, we sigh over the vanity of all human affairs, or else laugh at the folly of mankind. Such, we are apt to say, must be the result of pursuing phantoms. If men would but turn their attention to real objects, the world would be so much happier. When will people cease seeking after the substance of rainbows, or crying after the moon, and settle down to sober possibilities? Well, there is truth in our remarks. If men will seek after impossibilities, knowing them to be such, they are indeed foolish. But earnest faithful endeavor that is not successful, is not therefore necessarily useless. If through all the objects of endeavor the Good and the Beautiful has been sought, outward failure does not mean total ruin. A little higher away from the plane of indifference, a little nearer to the unattainable end; he who can say this may indeed have failed, but he has not lost everything. And he who denounces such ideas as *honesty*, and insists on external reality as the only *truth*, what is he but a Gaius, jostling about things he can never understand, and giving up every useful quest that is not pleasant to him.

Some places no doubt there are in life, some places in human history, where we are indeed compelled to say, failure; failure outwardly, and failure in truth. But not every case of delusive hope or of fruitless endeavor may be stamped with this mark. Rather would it be just that, over some spots where universal but superficial opinion has said, failure, defeat, disgrace, where some cherished plan has met its death-blow, where some life hope has seen its final day, we should write the wiser inscription; Sacred to the memory of a cherished, a divine, but now forever departed delusion. While it lived it gave strength and courage in endeavor, persistence in duty, faith in the noble and the right. Now when it is dead, when it is known for a delusion, we cannot look upon it as worthless. The thought of it is still strength, its former counsels still give persistence, the beauties it revealed still inspire faith. The Beautiful and the True shone through it, and lost though it be, we will worship its memory.

Such is one view and a true one, of the failures and false beliefs of mankind. Let no one say that by maintaining it we are putting a slight upon truth. Are we not rather holding that as there is external truth of life, so there is internal truth of feeling, and that if the one is the more easily seen, the other is not the less really existent.

J. ROYCE. '75.

This is how it happened down in Southwest Missouri:

He found a rope, and picked it up,
And with it walked away,
It happened that to t'other end,
A horse was hitched, they say.

They found a tree, and tied the rope
Unto a swinging limb;
It happened that the other end
Was somehow hitched to him.

Scholastic.

"AURORA LEIGH."

This character is supposed to have been born in Italy of an English father and Italian mother. She loses her mother first, then her father, when at a very tender age. She is then taken to England to be reared by a maiden aunt.

As she arrives at the age of womanhood her cousin Romney Leigh becomes enamored of her and offers his hand in marriage which she refuses. Aurora's aunt shortly afterward dies and she goes to London to sustain herself by writing, which she does for several years. In the meantime her cousin Romney finds a poor homeless girl in a hospital, whom he assists to a position, falls in love, and contemplates marriage with her. Lady Waldemar, a woman from the nobility, loves Romney, makes known her intentions to Aurora in hope that Aurora will use her influence to prevent the marriage. Aurora seeks the girl Marian, is struck by her purity, beauty and natural ability, and favors the marriage. Lady Waldemar at length succeeds in the carrying away and ruin of Marian. Romney seeks for her long, in vain, and after a time Lady Waldemar succeeds in winning his favor and they are about to be married when Aurora takes her departure for Italy. On her way she stops in Paris and accidentally discovers Marian and her child. Marian reveals the tale of her destruction, and the person who had worked it up and brought it about, namely, Lady Waldemar, to Aurora, who immediately writes a letter containing the facts to a friend in England. The contents of this letter were to be disclosed to Romney, providing he were not yet married to Lady Waldemar, which proved to be the case. Aurora takes Marian and her child to her Italian home, there to live and to be her companions. Romney breaks off his marriage with Lady Waldemar. He is afterwards mobbed as a fanatic and heretic, for attempting to teach and practice the doctrines of Fourier, without recourse to the clergy or observance of religious customs. Leigh Hall was burned and Romney himself wounded. This is followed by a long sickness and he entirely loses his sight. In course of time Romney travels to Italy to claim Marian, who with an acute sense of the deep shame upon her, conscientiously rejects his offer. When Aurora becomes aware of his exact condition and the circumstances which have wrought this condition, as he is about to bid her farewell, the concealed fountains of her former youthful love are broken up. She confesses her love for him and in her passion claims him for her own. She who was before the supplicated now becomes the supplicant, and she is not rejected.

This is the tale of the poem; but the character of of Aurora Leigh as developed by the story is peculiar and somewhat difficult to determine. She had chosen for herself the profession of poetess. She rejected the hand of the man she loved, whether through pride and independence, knowing her abilities and attractions, and feeling that she would be humbling herself by marriage; whether through ambition to become a great writer and believed her powers would be trammelled by such bonds, or whether through a simple caprice, we are left to judge. One is inclined to believe she chose such a course through pride and independence. She seems to have a bitter aversion to her aunt, and this aunt favored and urged her marriage with Romney, which in itself would be sufficient cause for a proud and ambitious spirit to do as she did do. These lines probably explain:

"Always Romney Leigh,
Was looking for the worms, I for the gods,

A godlike nature his; the gods look down,
Incurious of themselves; and certainly
'Tis well I should remember, how, those days,
I was a worm too, and he looked down on me."

Again:

"If I married him
I would not dare to call my soul my own,
Which, he had bought and paid for! Every thought,
And every heart-beat down there in the bill,—
Not one found honestly deductible,
From any use that pleased him! He might cut
My body into coins to give away
Among his other paupers; change my sons,
While I stood dumb as Griseld, for black babes
Or piteous foundlings; might unquestioned set
My right hand teaching in the ragged schools,
My left hand washing in the public baths."

In the first lines we find a touch of her pride, and in the latter a decided monition of her independent nature. That her affection and generosity were deep and lasting we find evidence in her feeling and protection to Marian, when once she is convinced of her innocence. And again in the final scene of the poem, when she yields her hand to her early lover, though he is now blind, his ambitions proved failures, his home a wreck, his tenants enemies, his life a disappointment; she shows a broad and honest love, a tender compassion. Led by these elements of her character we would fain call her noble, and feel that she is noble—if we could; but we cannot. She is shrouded with a certain perverseness from which we cannot divest her, and which we feel does not belong to a truly noble character. There is no particular circumstance that brings out this characteristic, but we are made to feel it by her general air and actions while with her aunt in England. True, the circumstances to a young and vivacious person are somewhat aggravating, but a noble nature could have been forgiving, should be more relenting.

As we have mentioned before, Aurora had chosen to be a poetess, and she proves herself to be a most remarkably egotistic poetess too. There are passages in which the *I* appears with immoderate frequency when speaking of her writings which, with an indication of her superior calling, gives us the impression we have mentioned.

We have only to place the leading expressions of a short passage together to bring out what has been indicated. For instance,

—"with no Amateur's
Irreverent haste and busy idleness
I've set myself to Art! . . . what's done!
. . . Behold at last a book.

If life blood's fertilizing, I wrung mine
On every leaf of this."

Again she very ingeniously puts words praising her book into the mouth of an honest countryman, in presenting it to his daughter; he says:

"Here be rhymes to pose on under trees
When April comes to let you! I've been told
These are not idle as so many are."

The sentiment is well concealed yet betrays itself. The good Lord Howe is made the instrument by which she brings out the same sentiment again in this wise:

"I saw you across the room, Miss Leigh
And I staid to keep the crowd of lion-hunters off
With faces toward your jungle."

We find these sentiments and indications of the baser human in the earlier portions of the poems, and they lower her in our mind in such a way that we cannot feel that she is more than an ordinary human being, and indeed a very ordinary one, for the ignoble